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English only

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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention  
on Environmental Impact Assessment in  
a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention  
serving as the Meeting of the Parties  
to the Protocol on Strategic  
Environmental Assessment

### **Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

#### **Second meeting**

Geneva, 27–30 May 2013

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

#### **Exchange of good practices**

## **Application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities**

### **Note by the secretariat**

## **I. Consideration by the Meeting of the Parties, the Bureau and the Working Group**

1. From the report of Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its fifth session, held from 20 to 23 June 2011 (ECE/MP.EIA/15, para. 46):

Summing up the [panel discussion on nuclear energy-related projects], [the moderator] emphasized the need for the development of guidance to codify practical experience, which could be based on the secretariat's background paper, and which might address key issues, such as: severe accidents and risk assessment; a range of alternatives including the zero alternative; the full life cycle (starting from the choice of materials and including decommissioning) and both front- and back-ends (mining and waste disposal); the duration of the validity of an assessment; cumulative impacts; two-stage assessment (at site selection and detailed design stages, combined with the safety statement); language problems; notification upon request; public influence on decision-making; and the interaction with other procedures, including strategic environmental assessment.

2. From the informal minutes of the meeting of the Bureau held from 31 January to 1 February 2012:

21. The Bureau asked the secretariat to contact the lead countries (Austria, Finland, Sweden) of the planned one-day workshop on the long-range impacts of nuclear energy-related activities to request that it be held back-to-back with the meeting of the Working Group in spring 2013. The Bureau considered that a free-standing workshop—an option

being considered by the lead countries—would be more costly for the trust fund, and would attract fewer participants, than a back-to-back event. The Bureau agreed to suggest to the Working Group that the national focal points be asked to submit case studies on the application of environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in the nuclear energy sector. The one-day workshop could then discuss or present the resulting collection of case studies, and could provide the basis for a discussion on possible further actions.

24. In addition, the Bureau requested the secretariat to ensure the sharing with Espoo Convention focal points of information on the arrangements for, and the outcomes of, [an] Aarhus Convention workshop on public participation in the nuclear sector. The workshop was expected to be held in spring 2013.

3. From the report of Report of the Working Group on EIA and SEA on its first meeting, held from 24 to 26 April 2012 (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2012/2, para. 34):

34. The secretariat introduced informal document No. 7, presenting actions suggested by the Bureau relating to the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities, including to follow-up to the outcomes of the panel discussion on that theme held at the MOP session in June 2011. The Working Group supported the eventual development of guidance to codify practical experience and the collection of case studies to support the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities. It noted that the secretariat's background note prepared for the panel discussion (ECE/MP.EIA.2011/5), could provide the basis for such guidance. It also noted that the seminar to be organized by Austria, Finland and Sweden for the exchange good practice on the nuclear energy-related activities could offer a forum for sharing experience in that regard. Finally, the Meeting was informed that an Aarhus Convention workshop on public participation in the nuclear sector was expected to be held in spring 2013, and that its outcomes would be made available to it.

4. From the informal minutes of the meeting of the Bureau held from 31 January to 1 February 2013:

14. (b) [The Bureau] Asked the secretariat to contact the lead countries (Austria, Finland and Sweden) of the planned seminar on the long-range impacts of nuclear energy-related activities to request that it be held during the meeting of the Working Group in November 2013. The Bureau agreed to suggest to the Working Group that the issues to be addressed by the seminar include: extension of the lifetime of nuclear power plants, and possible follow-up further to the completion of the comprehensive risk and safety assessments ("stress tests") of nuclear power plants in the European Union and related recommendations. It also proposed that experts from Belarus, France, Japan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine as well as energy regulators be invited to present practical experience in the field. The Bureau agreed, furthermore, that the seminar should provide the basis for the preparation of guidance to codify practical experience in the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities, for adoption by the next Meetings of the Parties. Finally, it decided that at its meeting in May 2013, the Working Group should hold initial discussions and establish a drafting group for the development of the draft guidance for consideration by the Working Group at its third meeting in November 2013;

## II. Background documentation

- *Application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities, Background paper by the secretariat*, for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/2011/5)

- *Information on panel discussion on nuclear energy-related projects* (revised on 31 May 2011), for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/2011/INF.8).
  - *Informal list of nuclear energy-related activities in the UNECE region*, first discussed at the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group on EIA, revised for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.
  - *Fostering nuclear safety in Europe through public information and participation*: For a workshop on Public participation in decision making in the nuclear domain, Luxembourg, 12-13 March 2013 Summary of a working paper by ANCCLI (Association Nationale des Comités et Comissions Locales d'informations)
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