

4th Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context

19-21 May 2008, Bucharest, Romania

High-level segment

20 May 2008

Intervention by Mr Chavdar Georgiev, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria

Mr. Minister,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, celebrating 10 years of the entry into force of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a transboundary context, we can pay tribute that it is a significant multilateral instrument for achieving sustainable development in the region and in South East Europe in particular.

The Republic of Bulgaria has an essential contribution to the implementation of the Convention after its entry into force in September 1997, taking into account that it was ratified by our country in March 1995. Particularly, this is the participation in the activities under the Convention at subregional level – in South-East Europe by organizing and cooperating for the organization of workshops and seminars on EIA and Environmental Assessment (EA) for South-East European countries, conducting EIA procedures in a transboundary context with neighbouring countries and exchanging useful experience with them.

Bulgaria has proved once again its responsible attitude towards this important international agreement by ratifying the two amendments of the Convention and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment in 2006.

In confirmation of this, today, at the 4th Meeting of Parties in Bucharest we will sign the Multilateral agreement among the countries of South-East Europe for implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

At present, the issue of coordinating and compatibility of Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is of primary importance in Bulgaria. The EIA procedure has been practically applied since 1992 and since 1st July 2004 the provisions of Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes have entered into force. The Environmental assessment can be considered as a starting point of the integration of the environmental objectives with the strategic goals of planning.

The integration of environmental policy into the sectoral policies at national, regional and local level is at its decisive stage – a more and more timely consideration of the requirements of Environmental Assessment is needed, especially in spatial planning but also

in other sectoral programmes, such as transport, energy, industry, and agriculture. In this respect, the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water has provided guidance to all sectoral ministries, consultations have been held and as a result the SEA procedures for the six Operational Programmes under the EU Structural and Cohesive funds, the other programmes under EU funding and also the Operational Programmes for transboundary cooperation with the neighbouring countries for the period 2007-2013 have been duly concluded.

The strengths of the environmental policy instruments in Bulgaria in relation to the EIA and SEA are as follows: the established legislative basis and transposed EU legislation; the rich experience in practical EIA implementation; the publicity and transparency ensured for the whole process and the possibility of participation of stakeholders at the earliest possible stage of the investment proposal.

In order to improve EIA and EA practice, the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water has issued Guidance on EIA for Investment Proposals and Manual for Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes in Bulgaria, which can be accessed through the website of the ministry.

One more proof of the active commitment of our country to the issue of coordinating and compatibility of EIA and SEA – the Draft Workplan for the period to the 5th Meeting of the Parties includes a workshop to be held in Bulgaria in the autumn of 2008 for South-East European experts to exchange experience in the coordination of EIA and SEA procedures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is our mission as politicians and human beings to conduct a responsible policy with regard to the management and rational use of natural resources. In this respect Bulgaria calls for targeted and coordinated action-oriented measures at regional level by implementing the Convention on EIA in a transboundary context.

At last but not least I would like to thank the Romanian Government for the excellent organization and warm hospitality!

Thank for your attention!

15 май 2008 г.

Съгласували:

Ем. Краева, директор на дирекция “СКВЕСМС”

Б. Каменова, началник на отдел “МС”

Изготвил:

Д. Пейчева, гл. експерт в отдел “МС”

Подготвено на основата на информация предоставена от дирекция “ПД”