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**SUPPORT TO THE FOURTH PAN-EUROPEAN ASSESSMENT REPORT
ON THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

European Environment Agency



5 May 2006

1. Development of the report outline (2005-April 2006)

The European Environment Agency has produced three pan-European State of the Environment reports¹ to support the Environment for Europe process. The Fifth Ministerial conference in Kiev in 2003 called upon the EEA to prepare the fourth assessment report for the next Environment for Europe ministerial conference, building on new partnerships, especially with UNECE and UNEP. Furthermore, during the discussion it was recommended that the new report, inter alia, should be a short, policy oriented indicator based report responding to the Belgrade agenda and helping assessing the progress on East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) strategy based on recent information.

The initial Belgrade report outline was produced by the EEA in early 2005 and underwent extensive consultations within the EEA, with UNECE Working Group for Environment Monitoring and Assessment (June), as well as with the NFP/Eionet (October 2005). Comments were also received from other international bodies involved in the “Environment for Europe” process such as OECD, UNEP and Regional Environment Centres (RECs).

¹ Europe’s Environment, the Dobris Assessment, 1995; Europe’s Environment, the Second Assessment, 1998 (“Dobris+3” was used as working title) and Europe’s environment, the third assessment, 2003 (working title: Kiev report).

The amended outline was also translated into Russian and submitted for discussion to the UNECE Committee for Environment Policy² (CEP) held in October 2005.

As soon as the SOER2005 was launched, the EEA organised the first production meeting on 8 December dedicated to the Belgrade report. This launched the production process planned to run throughout the whole of 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to further develop the report outline and to agree on the next steps in the production process. The meeting was mainly internal but benefited also from the participation of UNEP and OECD as key partners in the production process.

Early in 2006, the outline process and timetable of the report were discussed and approved by the EEA Bureau of the Management Board on 14 February, presented to the EEA Scientific Committee on 15 February and to the EEA NFP/Eionet group (of national focal points and main institutional partners) on 23 February 2006. The comments and suggestions made on these occasions were taken on board while further developing the outline of various sections/chapters of the report.

The rationale behind the proposed list of contents for the report was the following:

- to respond to the ministerial request in the Kiev conference by producing a short, indicator-driven, policy relevant report;
- to use the two policy pillars in place, namely the 6th Environmental Action Programme (for EU25 and other EEA members and collaborating countries) and the EECCA strategy (for EECCA countries) as main policy reference points for the report and assessment of progress;
- to deliver one single report covering all European and Central Asian UNECE member countries giving also better visibility to EECCA countries as well as to the Balkan region;
- to build and further use the information and assessment made during the preparation of the SOER2005;
- to connect and build synergies with other global, thematic and regional reports under preparation for the Belgrade conference or expected in 2007 (UNEP's GEO-4 report, EECCA strategy assessment report of OECD, UNEP's Carpathian report, IPCC 4th assessment, etc.).

The report will have approximately 200 pages, structured in 7 chapters (see table). The chapters' structure takes into consideration the two key policy documents mentioned above (6th EAP and EECCA strategy), trying to better reflect the EECCA countries' needs as defined in the strategy. Each chapter is divided into sections/sub-chapters, each of them expected to be 7-8 pages

² UNECE/CEP is the body responsible for the coordination and decision making process within the "Environment for Europe" process.

long, addressing key policy issues particularly of a trans-boundary nature and using the indicators as a main reporting tool. Case studies and overall assessments will complement and support the main storylines in addition to the selected indicators. The use of outlooks and scenarios will vary from topic to topic and will mainly rely on the available material (in the EEA or from other international sources). Overviews of the current availability of outlooks and scenarios relevant for the Belgrade report are underway, and will be incorporated into the different chapters as suitable.

The present table of contents for the report is presented in the table.

Main structure of the fourth assessment report (Belgrade 2007 report):

1. Introduction – Setting the scene

Background to the report
General socio-economic developments
Europe in the wider world, trade and environment³

2. Environment and health and quality of life

Introduction on multiple impacts
(Urban) air quality
Water quality (incl. water supply and sanitation, coastal water quality, flooding)
Chemicals and pesticides

3. Climate change

Impacts of climate change
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
Adaptation

4. Nature and biodiversity

Impacts
An integrated approach to halting biodiversity decline by 2010, land use
Nature protection (progress in Natura2000 and other designation)
Forest protection
Sustainable use of soils (including land use)⁴

5. Managing the marine environment⁵

6. Natural resources and wastes

Resource consumption,
Generation of waste,
Re-use and recycling
Sustainable production and consumption (*possible cooperation with UNEP, following the Swedish initiative- as input to the conference agenda*).

³ Europe in the wider world is now proposed as part of chapter 1 as setting the scene for the entire report. Previously this issue was foreseen as a separate chapter.

⁴ The section on soil might be brought together with the agriculture part on chapter 7.

⁵ Proposed as a separate chapter. Previously this issue was part of the chapter dealing with nature and biodiversity.

7. Sectoral integration

Integration of environment in sectoral policies

Energy

Transport

Agriculture

(Experiences in the thematic strategy approach in the EU, paying special attention to stakeholder involvement; Experiences in the Commission's SEA process – possible as boxes)

The latest outline of the report by chapter and section is attached to the present document as Annex⁶.

A Belgrade portal has been set up by the EEA to give access to all the information collected and materials developed throughout the preparation of the report – see: <http://ewindows.eu.org/belgrade07>.

2. The writing phase (April- September 2006)

On 16-17 March 2006 the EEA organised a two-day meeting with all the writers and contributors to the report in order to finalise the annotated outline and to start the writing phase (April-August 2006). Experts from EECCA countries were also invited to the meeting alongside the relevant international partners such as UNEP GRID Geneva and Arendal, OECD, and UNECE/WGEMA Secretariat.

Through CARDS funding for 2004-2006, a dedicated project was put in place in April this year. The project is designed to assist in producing the EEA core set of indicators for the Balkan countries as well as to collect and produce relevant case studies or qualitative assessments for the region.

From before the Kiev conference in 2003 the EEA has been in discussion with the Commission on a second round of funding for cooperation with EECCA countries. A formal proposal was submitted in July 2005 and in April 2006 the TACIS funding became available. Due to the 7 months delay in receiving the funds, the several supporting projects foreseen to be carried out under this umbrella were revisited (to match the current phase of the report preparation) and put in place by the beginning of May. The TACIS funding is instrumental for both ensuring the requested institutional partnership with UNECE, UNEP, RECs⁷ as well as in providing input to the Belgrade report in some key areas (EECCA core set of indicators, water and air quality, climate change, waste and material flows). However, due to the delay in receiving funding, the focus of the TACIS assistance (to run until the end of 2007) has shifted slightly from

⁶ Annex: Detailed outline of the Belgrade report (per chapters and sections) is issued as Informal paper 13 for the sixth session of the UNECE Working Group.

⁷ The main contractors to execute the activities foreseen under the TACIS grant agreement are UNECE (for EECCA indicators development and WGEMA Secretariat), UNEP (for EECCA indicators production), REC Central Asia (for air quality and climate change capacity building, indicators production and reporting compliance under international obligations).

mainly supporting the report preparation towards capacity building and reporting compliance.

Last but not least, the UN Statistical Office has given support to the process through the regular questionnaire addressing the non-EU countries in the field of water and waste. The information collected, in particular covering EECCA region and Balkans, has complemented that collected through the regular processes run by Eurostat for the EU25 and the candidate countries.

3. Future steps

As future steps in the Belgrade process, a meeting is planned for 6-7 June between the writers and contributors of the Belgrade report and their counterparts in OECD dealing with the preparation of the EECCA strategy policy assessment report (another key product being prepared by OECD requested in Kiev for the next pan-European ministerial conference in Belgrade). The purpose of the meeting is mainly to coordinate messages, set up linkages as well as make the logical and smooth link between the two documents.

The EEA is also collaborating with a UNDP initiative to make a Balkan regional environment report as input to the Belgrade conference. The EEA is working with UNDP to try to develop a coherent and consistent information package on the Balkan region for the conference (the Balkan and the EECCA policy assessment reports complemented and rounded with information and assessments on the state and trends on the environment for the whole UNECE area).

The writing phase for the Belgrade report will run over summer 2006 with two key milestones: namely, mid June for a first draft, and beginning of September for a revised draft already discussed and commented internally amongst the authors and contributors of various sections.

A first draft of the whole report will be produced and translated into Russian in September 2006 for the review phase. A two-months (October-November) consultation period is foreseen. All UNECE countries and various target groups (officials, NGOs, Eionet, WGEMA members) will be invited to assist EEA in improving the quality of the report by bringing additional relevant aspects elements/examples in content of the various sections or chapters. Moreover, with TACIS funding support two additional UNECE/WGEMA meetings will be organised, focussed on the Belgrade report as follows:

- November 2006 – to discuss the draft report (as part of the consultation process) as well as the EECCA indicators produced and used in the context of the report;
- June 2007 – to discuss communication and dissemination aspects related to the Belgrade report as well as lessons learnt during the preparation process.

4. Other expected outputs

In parallel, with the report development, the EEA has produced a comprehensive guideline document aiming to assist the writers and contributors during the entire preparation process. The document has undergone extensive revision and development and is available for on-line consultation through the Belgrade portal. The guide, foreseen as a living document throughout the entire report preparation, will be further completed with information on the consultation and dissemination processes as well as with suggestions on presentation and design to cohere with and promote the EEA's corporate image. The Belgrade guidelines should also serve in the long run as a useful tool for the preparation of state of environment reports at national, regional or local levels.

Under the TACIS funding, two derived products will be produced for the Belgrade conference, namely:

- methodological guidelines for the production of EECCA core set of indicators⁸;
- a trial EECCA indicators compendium, summarizing the results of the implementation of the methodological guide to the specific conditions of EECCA countries.

These products will summarise the methodological and practical work jointly carried out by UNECE, EEA and UNEP with EECCA countries (and their experts) to identify, describe and produce a limited number of policy-relevant indicators compiled into the so-called "EECCA core set of indicators". Although still experimental at this stage and mainly using international data sources, the compendium of EECCA indicators will represent an important basis for further improvements and streamlining of the reporting system in EECCA countries.

5. Belgrade report timetable 2006-2007

The Belgrade Conference will take place on 10-12 October 2007. Following the recommendations made in Kiev, namely to produce the report well ahead of the conference in order to allow the countries and their respective officials sufficient time for analysis, the time planning aims for the final report to be delivered at the end of May 2007, in Russian and English.

Counting back from this deadline, the preliminary timetable of activities is as follows:

⁸ EEA is awarding a contract to UNECE for the execution of this activity.

Preliminary timeline of activities

Line of work	Activity	Time (status May 06 ⁹)
Concept development	expert meeting and WGEMA	May–Oct 2005
	develop list of contents	Nov 05-Feb 06
	development of guidelines	Jan – May 2006
Data collection	socio-economic indicators: update EEA data warehouse	Jan-May 2006
	EEA indicators: regular production with specific attention for Balkan and Switzerland	Feb- June 2006
	EECCA indicators: TACIS project	May- Sept 2006
Writing	compilation of EECCA indicator report (derived product)	June 06- March 2007
	writing Chapters/section (first draft including interlinkages)	May- Sept 2006
	first editing & translation into Russian of drafts	Sept 2006
Review and finalisation	consultation on the detailed outline & request for input (UNECE/WGEMA)	June 2006
	consultation on drafts in English & Russian with all relevant stakeholders (Eionet, UNECE countries, international organisations)	Oct-Dec 2006
	final revision and editing	Jan – Feb 07
Production	lay-out and printing, translation of summary	March-May 2007
Launch and dissemination	launch in the countries	June-August 2007
	discussion main findings and messages of the report in UNECE/WGEMA (including NGOs)	June 2007
	launch at the Belgrade conference	10 Oct 2007

Note: specific data collection and review to be coordinated with EECCA strategy progress report of OECD

⁹ The amended timing proposal is due first to the later start of the production process due to the finalisation of the SOER2005 and also to the difficulties encountered in obtaining the necessary TACIS funding to cover the work on the EECCA countries.