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UNECE CELEBRATES WORLD WATER DAY 2010

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A healthy world needs clean water! Unsafe water causes 4 billion cases of diarrhoea each year, and results in 1.7 million deaths, mostly of children under five. Everyday, 2 million tons of sewage and industrial and agricultural waste are discharged into the world's water, the equivalent weight of the entire human population of 6.8 billion people!

This year, [World Water Day](#), celebrated annually on 22 March since 1993, drew attention to the importance of water quality.

On that day, UNECE participated in the global celebrations organized by UNEP in Nairobi. H.E. Mrs. Margita Fuchsová, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to UNEP and UN-Habitat spoke about the European and Czech experience in improving water quality and about the UNECE Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health.

UNECE also participated in the high-level dialogue of the UN General Assembly in New York on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015. Ján Kubiš, UNECE's Executive Secretary, was one of the speakers at the Panel on Water, Peace and Security, together with H.E. Mr. Joao Gomes Cravinho, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Portugal and Mr. Olcay Unver, Coordinator of the UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) (UNESCO). The panel was moderated by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, President of the Arab Water Council and Former Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of Egypt. □

UNECE is actively working to improve water quality in the Pan-European region. Since its entry into force in 1996, the [UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes \(Water Convention\)](#) has provided an important legal framework and contributed to improving water quality and transboundary water management in the pan-European region.

The Convention's [Protocol on Water and Health](#), which entered into force in 2005, aims to protect human health and well-being through improving water management, and thus water quality, and through preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases. The Protocol is the first international agreement of its kind adopted specifically to attain an adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone, and effectively protect water used as a source of drinking water.

OUTCOME OF THE 27TH MEETING OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

The twenty-seventh meeting of the Compliance Committee of the UNECE Aarhus Convention took place in Geneva from 16 to 19 March 2010.

The Committee discussed the substance of communications concerning:

- Slovakia, in connection with public participation in decision-making on the completion of the Mochovce nuclear power plant in the country ([Communication ACCC/C/2009/41](#)).
- Armenia, in connection with public participation related to decision-making on the long-term exploitation of copper and molybdenum deposits in Teghut, in the Lori region ([Communication ACCC/C/2009/43](#)).
- United Kingdom, in connection with access to information and public participation regarding the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route bypass ([Communication ACCC/C/2009/38](#)).
- United Kingdom, in connection with an opencast coal mine and adjacent coal processing plant in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales ([Communication ACCC/C/2009/40](#)).

In the discussions on all four cases, representatives of both the Government and the communicant participated. The Committee held that Communication ACCC/C/2009/40 was not admissible. The Committee will proceed to prepare draft findings in the other three communications and, where appropriate, recommendations.

The Committee reviewed five new communications, three of which have been determined admissible and one inadmissible. The Committee deferred its decision on the preliminary admissibility of the fifth communication to its twenty-eighth meeting, which will take place in Geneva from 15 to 18 June 2010.

The Committee also reviewed progress reports submitted by [Albania](#), [Armenia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Turkmenistan](#) and [Ukraine](#) concerning the activities they were undertaking to implement the recommendations of the Meeting of the Parties, which had found each of them to be in non-compliance. In each case, the Committee requested further information to be submitted or for the Party concerned to promptly provide information the Committee had previously requested. It also called on the Parties concerned to provide information on the steps being taken to bring about compliance with the Convention. □



Not an official record - For information only

AGEING IN MOLDOVA: THE ROAD AHEAD

UNECE advises Republic of Moldova on policy-development in response to ageing

The UNECE Population Unit is preparing a Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing for the Republic of Moldova. Based on an in-depth appraisal of the situation in the country, recommendations will be prepared on how to implement internationally agreed policy standards, as set out in the Madrid Plan on Ageing. During a recent fact-finding mission, Andres Vikat and Viviane Brunne of the UNECE Population Unit interviewed stakeholders from government, private sector, civil society, trade unions and academia. They were received by Deputy Prime Minister Ion Negrei and Minister of Labour, Social Protection and Family Valentina Buliga, as well as other high-ranking officials, to discuss the way forward.

Ageing in Moldova is progressing fast, due to a combination of factors: While people live longer, the fertility rate is 1.3 children per woman in 2008, which falls far short of the level of 2.1 needed to maintain the replacement of generations. Population decline is further enhanced by high levels of out-migration. Several hundred thousand working age population have left the country and are not contributing to the Moldovan social protection system.

High unemployment rates and informal work further increase the burden on the pension system. Currently only two persons contribute per each pensioner, which is not sustainable.

The challenges caused by these dynamics are many: Reforms of the social protection system have to ensure that benefits paid out cover basic subsistence of pensioners while ensuring long term sustainability of the system. Capacities of nursing homes, day care centres and home-based care have to meet actual needs and the ageing labour force has to be better trained. The UNECE Road Map on Mainstreaming Ageing will address all relevant issues in an integrated manner. Its development has to be accompanied by a broad public discourse to generate ownership for the necessary reforms. In the process, older people have to become active participants in shaping Moldova's future. □



PARMA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE STRENGTHENS UNECE ROLE IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH PROCESS

The 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, held in Parma from 10-12 March 2010, concluded with the adoption by 53 European Governments of the Parma Declaration on Health and Environment. In this Declaration, Ministers commit to act on key environment and health challenges, including the health and environmental impacts of climate change.

Ministers further called on the WHO Regional Office for Europe to discuss with the European Commission, the European Environment Agency, UNECE, UNEP and other partners, on setting up European information platforms for systematic sharing of best practices, research, data, information, technology and tools focused on health at all levels.

Two new bodies will be established to further strengthen the environment and health process:

- a European Environment and Health Task Force, which will leading the implementation and monitoring of the process commitments. UNECE will be a full member of this task force;
- a European Environment and Health Ministerial Board, which will become the political driving force of the process. UNECE's Executive Secretary will be a member of this Board, alongside WHO's Regional Director for Europe, the Director of UNEP's Regional Office and 8 ministers or their high-level representatives.

The 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health will be held in 2016. □

