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COMPLETION OF THE FIRST ESPOO CONVENTION PROCEDURE IN BELARUS



The full procedure of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a transboundary context according to the Espoo Convention has been applied for the first time in Belarus.

The projected Hydroelectric Power Plant on the Neman River, located 11 kilometers from the Lithuanian-Belarusian border, has been reviewed according to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), with the involvement of Lithuania's authorities and the public of both countries. The authorities of Kaliningrad, Russian Federation (a signatory of the Convention), were also invited to participate in the process.

A mid-term workshop was organized in Minsk by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus on 5 November 2010 to present the results of the assessment of the pilot EIA project as well as a draft manual on the implementation of the Espoo Convention in Belarus. International experts from neighbouring countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and the Espoo Convention secretariat have been invited to participate at the workshop. □

For further information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/eia/eia.htm>
or contact Nick Bonvoisin at: eia.conv@unece.org.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY FORMULATION ON AGEING

UNECE's Population Unit took part in a joint UNDESA/UNFPA workshop on Evidence-Based Policy Formulation on Ageing in Chisinau, Moldova, from 27 to 29 October. Around 45 participants from eleven economies in transition took part in the workshop, which focused on the design and implementation of surveys on ageing in order to collect data to inform policy. Many of these countries face complex challenges from the combination of increased longevity, reduced fertility, massive emigration of working-age adults, and economic upheaval. The workshop brought together national focal points on ageing, governmental representatives, statisticians, sociologists, demographers and physicians, allowing for a broad diversity of viewpoints.



upon the opportunities of rapid population ageing. So far this project has helped to formulate strategies in the Republic of Armenia, and the work is ongoing in Moldova. Surveys on ageing help to provide quantitative and qualitative data which can feed into this and other projects. A workshop report will be provided online at

http://www.un.org/ageing/building_national.html.

The workshop group was taken on an informational visit to the Moldovan National Registry (<http://www.registru.md/en>) of the Ministry of Information Development, to see the high-tech processes involved in collecting and linking data from a wide range of sources to produce a state-of-the-art population register. □

For more information on the Population Unit's work on ageing please visit: <http://www.unece.org/pau/age/welcome.htm>
For information on the road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing, contact: Fiona.Willis-Nunez@unece.org.

COOPERATION ON WATER IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

The first National Consultation in the Drin Dialogue was held on 2 November in Ohrid, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning and the Special Representative of the European Union in the country.

The Drin Dialogue is a structured consultation process aiming at the development of a shared vision among the riparian countries and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin. The extended Drin Basin, which includes parts of Albania, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (UNMIK), links the lakes, wetlands,

rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance. Several national parks and protected areas have been established to protect exceptional natural values. In Lake Ohrid 10 of 17 fish species are unique for this lake, which is an example of great biodiversity values in the basin.



The objective of the Drin Dialogue is to develop an agreed shared vision before summer 2011. The Drin Dialogue is facilitated by UNECE and the Global Water Partnership Mediterranean (GWP-Med) using the platforms of the UNECE Water Convention and the Petersberg II/Athens Declaration Processes (www.gwpm.org). The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is funding the first phase of the Drin Dialogue with a grant to UNECE.

In their contacts with the Secretariat, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia informed that the country is likely to initiate accession to the UNECE Water Convention in 2011. □

For further information, please contact Bo Libert at: bo.libert@unece.org.

EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS EXPERT GROUP

1-3 NOVEMBER 2010, TASHKENT



Asian Transport Links Expert Group (EATL EG) on 1-3 November 2010, in Tashkent and Navoi.

The EATL Expert Group assists in developing efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian connections that could provide additional inland transport options for trade flows between Europe and Asia. The group has been created to contribute to the implementation of commitments originating from the "Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links" signed by Ministers of Transport on 19 February 2008 in Geneva.

On 1-2 November 2010, the Expert Group continued to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and

The Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, UNECE and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) jointly organized the 5th meeting of Euro-

threats to the Euro-Asian Inland transport routes. Experts agreed on the data that need to be collected and processed to identify and prioritize inland routes and discussed studies being prepared by consultants on: Euro-Asian transport flows, comparisons between inland and maritime transport options and non-physical obstacles to international transport along the EATL routes.

On 3 November 2010, participants visited the International Intermodal Logistics Centre and Free Industrial Economic Zone at Navoi. The Navoi airport already services Bangkok, Mumbai, Dubai, New Delhi, Milan, Moscow and Seoul and it lies along the shortest road and railroad connection between Europe and Beijing. At the Navoi's Free Industrial Economic Zone many companies are busy setting up operations or constructing facilities. Participants visited warehouses with perishables. In particular, they could observe fresh Uzbek fruits being readied for exports. Uzbekistan's strategic location, its rapidly growing infrastructure, the wealth of natural resources and qualified labour force make it a suitable transit location. □

For more information, please visit:

http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/wp5_ge2_05.html.

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CENTER OPENS IN BELARUS

The "International Energy Center" was inaugurated in Minsk on 29 October 2010. This center aims at attracting domestic and foreign investment in long-term projects for implementation of activities related to improving the efficiency of energy production and consumption in Belarus.

This center was established in the framework of the UNDP/GEF Project "Removing Barriers to Energy Efficiency Improvements in the state sector in Belarus", which is being implemented over the period January 2007 – December 2011, in cooperation with the Energy Efficiency Department under the State Committee on Standardization of the Republic of Belarus. UNECE is supporting this project under its Energy Efficiency 21 programme, through the in-kind



contribution of technical assistance and advisory services.

The "International Energy Center", constituted in the form of a Closed Joint Stock Company, will take an active part in designing national, departmental and regional energy efficiency programs and contribute to identifying potential project activities in this area. It will foster energy efficiency market formation and Private-Public Partnerships in Belarus, contribute to the introduction of best practices, technologies and energy efficiency measures, and enhance regional cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energy. □

For more information, please contact:

adam.sek@unece.org.

Information Service
United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH-1211 Geneva 10 - Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 917 44 44
Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05
E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
<http://www.unece.org>



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