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## Committee on Environmental Policy

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### Environmental performance reviews

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## Third Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia: recommendations

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

The document presents the recommendations of the third Environmental Performance Review of the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia agreed upon by the Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews at its meeting held in Geneva on 9-11 January 2019.

The Committee is invited to adopt the recommendations.

### Chapter 1: Legal, policy and institutional framework

#### Recommendation 1.1:

The Government should:

- (a) Revitalize the National Council for Sustainable Development and ensure its active role to guide efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the monitoring of progress towards them;
- (b) Proceed with setting up aspirational and measurable national targets through a participatory and transparent process;
- (c) Ensure the production of indicators to measure progress towards achievement of the SDGs;
- (d) Ensure the preparation of reports presenting the results of monitoring of progress towards achievement of the SDGs;
- (e) Ensure that the SDGs are integrated into future planning documents;
- (f) Raise awareness of the SDGs among central and local government authorities.

#### Recommendation 1.2:

The Government should ensure:

- (a) That all documents subject to strategic environmental assessment (SEA) undergo an SEA;
- (b) That authorities proposing planning documents observe all stages and requirements of the SEA process, including monitoring, follow-up and public participation;
- (c) The improvement of screening procedures by raising awareness and encouraging the use of the criteria to determine which planning documents are subject to SEA;

- (d) The improvement of the quality of SEA reports, in particular through securing sufficient expertise for the evaluation of environmental effects;
- (e) Training and capacity-building on SEA.

Recommendation 1.3:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Solicit the support of international organizations and donors in organizing a pilot transboundary SEA;
- (b) Establish bilateral practical cooperation with neighbouring counties on SEA issues, such as establishing working groups.

Recommendation 1.4:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Reorganize, as necessary, and strengthen the relevant main departments, including the Department for European Union, in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, with required capacity for the European Union approximation process;
- (b) Ensure careful planning and allocation of tasks in the process of approximation to the European Union acquis;
- (c) Start preparation for the screening process to optimize tasks for policy planning and for implementation of relevant primary and secondary legislation.

Recommendation 1.5:

The Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Undertake a study on the environmental impacts of the mining sector;
- (b) Develop a policy document to address environmental impacts from mining;
- (c) Seek support from other countries and international organizations to identify good practices on rehabilitation and remediation of land degraded by mining activities;
- (d) Develop subsidiary legislation on financial guarantees to cover the costs of rehabilitation and remediation;
- (e) Develop a policy document to address historic pollution from mining and industry;
- (f) Prepare the law on soil protection and promote its adoption.

Recommendation 1.6:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Develop and implement policies for greening the activities of the Ministry, in particular with regard to water and energy efficiency, waste management and carbon neutrality;
- (b) Introduce green criteria for public procurement for projects under the umbrella of the Ministry;
- (c) Promote the greening of activities of other governmental institutions.

Recommendation 1.7:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should intensify efforts to assist municipalities in the implementation of their environment-related competences, including by:

- (a) Enabling all seven staff in the Department for Coordination of Work of the Local Self-Government Units and Supervision Work to provide support and guidance to Local Self-Government Units and transferring the waste permitting responsibilities

to the Department for Waste in the Administration for Environment, while strengthening the capacity of the Department for Waste;

- (b) Providing training to municipalities on environmental issues;
- (c) Establishing, together with the Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport and Communications and Association of Local Self-Government Units (ZELS), a working group on land and environment for matters related to budget planning for several issues in waste, water and air protection.

Recommendation 1.8:

The Government should:

- (a) Ensure the training of staff in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, in particular by allocation of adequate resources to enable specialized training in line with needs;
- (b) Establish training schemes on environmental issues for civil servants in sectoral ministries.

## **Chapter 2: Regulatory and compliance assurance mechanisms**

Recommendation 2.1:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should propose to the Government the reorganization of the Administration for Environment and the Macedonian Environmental Information Centre into an executive environmental agency, which should focus on the implementation of environmental legislation, ensure environmental data collection, monitoring, assessment and reporting, address nature conservation and provide expert support to the Government.

Recommendation 2.2:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should undertake the necessary steps to streamline the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process and increase its efficiency for the public administration, investors and the public by:

- (a) Bringing the list of activities included in national legislation into compliance with the list of activities laid down in annexes of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and relevant European Union EIA directives, and aligning the screening process with these directives, notably in terms of clarity and transparency;
- (b) Ensuring a reasonable timeframe and opportunities for public participation, with a minimum of 30 days for public comments on EIA studies, which may, where appropriate, be extended as necessary, taking into account, among other matters, the nature, complexity and size of the proposed activity;
- (c) Revising the legislation on elaborates for environmental protection by limiting them to small activities outside the scope of the activities subject to EIA and giving responsibility for issuing approval of decisions for elaborates to Local Self-Government Units;
- (d) Providing training and methodological support under institutional strengthening projects to the staff of the Unit for Environmental Impact Assessment and Soil Protection, and to the local authorities.

Recommendation 2.3:

To develop further integrated environmental permitting, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Promote the adoption of the draft law on industrial emissions;
- (b) Revise the list of installations requiring an A-type permit and bring it into compliance with the list of installations laid down in Annex I of Directive 2010/75/EU

of the European Parliament and of the Council on industrial emissions (Industrial Emissions Directive);

(c) Prepare proposals for simplifying and clarifying the legislation between B-type permit and sectoral permit requirements, especially in water and waste management;

(d) Abolish the practice of issuing “permit for adjustment with an operational plan” and provide industrial activities that cannot immediately comply with the integrated environmental permitting requirements a transition period defined in the integrated permit;

(e) Change the rules on reporting by operators with permitted installations to make reporting a useful tool;

(f) Ensure that data and information in the reports are validated by the controlling authorities and made publicly available according to the requirements of Pollutant Release and Transfer Register reporting.

Recommendation 2.4:

The State Environmental Inspectorate should:

(a) Start the implementation of the outcomes of the European Union-funded projects, especially of the Twinning Project for which it was the main beneficiary, and organize training and methodological support for the authorized inspectors of the environment at local level;

(b) Promote the adoption of the draft law on environmental inspection.

Recommendation 2.5:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Prioritize work on the European Union Ecolabel and Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS);

(b) Continue to promote the EMAS and ISO 14001 in collaboration with the Economic Chamber.

Recommendation 2.6:

The Ministry of Economy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, should promote Corporate Social Responsibility practices and encourage companies to integrate sustainability information into their reporting.

### **Chapter 3: Greening the economy**

Recommendation 3.1:

The Government should complement the existing regulatory framework for integrated pollution prevention and control permitting procedures for air and water pollution with effective financial incentives to stimulate pollution abatement.

Recommendation 3.2:

The Government, in consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders, should:

(a) Review available policies and measures for overcoming the current obstacles to implementation of cost reflective waste tariffs for collection of waste and its disposal on landfills, while taking into account the need to protect poor and vulnerable groups in the population, and advancing the regionalization of waste services;

(b) Implement measures that are effectively raising bill collection rates for waste service fees.

Recommendation 3.3:

The Government should:

- (a) Adjust excise duties on motor fuels to move towards European Union minimum rates and eliminate the differentiation between rates on diesel and petrol, following a broad, participatory, multi-stakeholder discussion;
- (b) Reform the vehicle registration tax and the excise duty on imports of passenger motor cars by taking into account environmentally relevant factors such as emission standards, including CO<sub>2</sub>, the age of the vehicle and type of motor fuel.

Recommendation 3.4:

The Government should make more use of green procurement, building on international experience of how to integrate environmental considerations into public tenders, including by setting credible standards for what constitutes green products and services, such as eco-labels.

Recommendation 3.5:

The Government should:

- (a) Create a favourable policy framework for attracting green investment and innovation, including for nature-based solutions;
- (b) Join the 2016 Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E).

## **Chapter 4: Environmental monitoring and information**

Recommendation 4.1:

The Government should ensure adequate capacity of the environmental monitoring networks operated and coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Hydrometeorological Service and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, by:

- (a) Providing adequate and modern monitoring equipment, replacing outdated instruments and ensuring appropriate resources for regular maintenance and servicing of each monitoring network and related integrated databases, independently of funding provided by technical cooperation projects;
- (b) Ensuring stable and adequate funding of forest and biodiversity monitoring activities, supporting the development of a forest inventory and promoting improved coordination of different biodiversity monitoring activities within the scope of a national biodiversity monitoring system;
- (c) Conducting training on the basis of international best practices to strengthen the expertise of officials and operators dealing with environmental monitoring and information.

Recommendation 4.2:

The Government should advise the City of Skopje and other municipalities to:

- (a) Ensure adequate capacity to monitor noise systematically;
- (b) Provide adequate and modern noise monitoring equipment;
- (c) Ensure appropriate resources and training for regular noise monitoring and for the timely development of city noise maps;
- (d) Develop city noise maps.

Recommendation 4.3:

The Government should prepare a national strategy and action plan on environmental monitoring and integrated information management supported by an updated national book of environmental parameters and protocols for data sharing, clarifying

responsibilities related to environmental monitoring and management of monitoring data and information flows, including through amending the related legislation as appropriate.

Recommendation 4.4:

The Government should ensure financial and human resources and capacity for:

(a) The Central Environmental Laboratory and the Air Quality Calibration Laboratory of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, to adequately service, update and calibrate monitoring and laboratory equipment and meet the necessary requirements for their full accreditation under the ISO/IEC 17025 standard on “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories”;

(b) The laboratory of the Hydrometeorological Service, to increase its capacity to monitor surface water quality and meet the requirements of the national water-related legislation through appropriate and modern laboratory equipment.

Recommendation 4.5:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, in cooperation with relevant ministries and environmental data holders, should:

(a) Establish a fully functional national integrated environmental information system able to support the monitoring, processing, reporting and dissemination of information on all environmental topics, including for informed decision-making and e-reporting to international organizations;

(b) Ensure sufficient and stable resources so that the new national integrated environmental information system, once developed, can be effectively operated and appropriately maintained;

(c) Use the new system to combine environmental information with data sources from other sectors, in order to support integrated, cross-sectoral policymaking and decision-making, including for achievement of the SDGs;

(d) Continue to support the implementation of Shared Environmental Information System principles of open access to data, to provide timely, relevant and reliable information on the state of the environment to policymakers and the public.

Recommendation 4.6:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Continue with regular production of national environmental indicators and produce all remaining indicators in the ECE list of environmental indicators, as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development green growth indicators, that are relevant to the country;

(b) Establish relevant environmental indicators for reporting on the environmental dimension of the SDGs;

(c) Establish data collection and processing mechanisms for environmental indicators where such data are not yet available.

Recommendation 4.7:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Produce regularly reports on the state of the environment, including the biennial Environmental Indicators Report and the quadrennial State of the Environment Report, supported by better quality data and timely information in full alignment with Shared Environmental Information System principles of open access to environmental data, and include in these reports a summary for policymakers;

(b) Strengthen the policy relevance of these reports by moving towards multisector integrated environmental assessment approaches, including: (i) cross-

cutting issues; (ii) assessment of progress towards environmental goals and targets and the potential effects and effectiveness of the implementation of environmental protection measures under legal obligations and strategic action plans; and (iii) outlooks and projections of possible future negative trends and their implications vis-à-vis national goals and policies.

## **Chapter 5: Access to information, public participation, access to justice and education for sustainable development**

### Recommendation 5.1:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Improve its website to ensure the provision of continuously open and user-friendly free access to environmental information, and enhance the use of social media;
- (b) Ensure that the future national integrated environmental information system is fully accessible through its website;
- (c) Ensure free online access to a wider spectrum of updated environmental legislation;
- (d) Support other relevant institutions to make available environmental information in their possession on open access on their websites;
- (e) Conduct awareness-raising activities to enhance the civil society capacity to access environmental information and monitor progress in raising the level of public awareness of environmental issues.

See also Recommendation 4.5.

### Recommendation 5.2:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Ensure effective public participation procedures;
- (b) Develop capacity and expertise to ensure effective public participation, including by conducting training for public officials responsible for public participation procedures;
- (c) Enable public participation in decision-making on chemicals, for instance by initiating dialogue with the involvement of authorities and relevant stakeholders, including producers, researchers, civil society organizations and health and environmental specialists.

### Recommendation 5.3:

The Government should:

- (a) Establish detailed procedures to ensure effective public participation in decision-making on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the environment and placing them on the market;
- (c) Amend the 2010 Law on Food Safety to include provision for public participation in decision-making on food and food products containing or consisting of GMOs, and establish detailed procedures to ensure effective public participation, in anticipation of accession to the European Union.

### Recommendation 5.4:

The Ministry of Justice should:

- (a) Ensure, in cooperation with the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, regular training on environmental legislation for judges, prosecutors and lawyers;

(b) Promote, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and respective universities, the inclusion of a course on environmental law, as either a mandatory or elective course, at major faculties of law;

(c) Raise awareness, train public officials and develop other preventive measures, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Ministry of Internal Affairs, to protect environmental defenders from being penalized, persecuted or harassed in any way in exercising their rights.

Recommendation 5.5:

The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the relevant judicial branch, should develop a guiding document for the courts on the application of environmental law.

Recommendation 5.6:

The Government should consider establishing mechanisms to actively promote access to information, public participation and access to justice in relation to environmental matters.

Recommendation 5.7:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should undertake a comprehensive analysis to estimate the necessary expenditures (human and financial resources) for the satisfactory implementation on the ground of access to information, public participation and access to justice in relation to environmental matters.

Recommendation 5.8:

The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, municipalities and other relevant institutions, should:

- (a) Develop an action plan for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD);
- (b) Develop competences for educators in ESD;
- (c) Integrate ESD into the curricula of all education levels and in lifelong learning, teacher education and in-service training;
- (d) Integrate ESD into student assessments at all education levels.

Recommendation 5.9:

The Government should:

- (a) Assign a clear mandate on ESD to the Ministry of Education and Science;
- (b) Establish a coordination mechanism on ESD among all relevant stakeholders;
- (c) Nominate a national focal point and participate in ECE regional activities on ESD;
- (d) Amend the mandate of the Academy for Teachers to include ESD in its activities and establish the Academy so that it can support the in-service training of educators and teachers;
- (e) Allocate resources for the implementation of ESD, including to support eco-schools.

## **Chapter 6: Implementation of international agreements and commitments**

Recommendation 6.1:

The Government should:

- (a) Establish efficient coordination mechanisms among relevant state

institutions, scientific institutions and civil society organizations;

(b) Undertake an in-depth analysis of the administrative and technical capacity and financial needs of the bodies in charge of the implementation of obligations deriving from multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);

(c) On the basis of the analysis, prepare an action plan to ensure that the adequate administrative and technical capacity and financial resources are secured for the implementation of obligations deriving from MEAs;

(d) Increase efforts to fulfil its reporting obligations under MEAs and ensure the quality of national reports;

(e) Ensure the participation of its representatives in the meetings of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Recommendation 6.2:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Ministry of Economy should:

(a) Revise all legal and strategic documents that regulate and foresee hydropower construction to ensure that the site selection criteria applied to hydropower plants are based on international best practice, which excludes hydropower construction in protected areas and areas with high hydro-morphological and biodiversity status;

(b) In cooperation with neighbouring countries that are pursuing a similar path in energy sector development, conduct a transboundary study into the cumulative and combined effects on the environment of planned small hydropower plants and associated new infrastructure construction, taking into consideration seismic and climate change effects;

(c) Promote the production of electrical energy from renewable sources other than hydropower;

(d) Ensure that SEAs carried out on energy sector plans and programmes under development are based on international best practice and provide greater transparency and public engagement.

Recommendation 6.3:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Transpose into national legislation Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso III Directive) and work on implementing it;

(b) Identify hazardous activities falling under the scope of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and notify potentially affected countries accordingly;

(c) Submit an updated national self-assessment and action plan under the Convention's strategic approach, together with project proposals addressing needs and challenges identified;

(d) Prepare in a participatory and transparent manner the implementation report on the Convention for the period 2016–2019 and submit it by the due date to the Convention's secretariat.

Recommendation 6.4:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Make publicly available the information on the participation of the country in environmental agreements and international environmental processes and commitments, and the related national implementation and progress reports;

(b) Provide timely access to information on environmental agreements and international processes and commitments to enable effective public participation;

(c) Ensure the effective participation of the public in decision-making on

environmental agreements and international processes and commitments, and in the preparation of national reports and other substantive inputs on their implementation;

(d) Include representatives of relevant environmental civil society organizations in national delegations participating in international environmental processes.

**Recommendation 6.5:**

The Government should start the necessary preparatory work and proceed with:

- (a) Ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury;
- (b) Accession to the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
- (c) Accession to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (d) Acceptance of amendments to the Protocol on Heavy Metals, Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol) to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;
- (e) Ratification of the Almaty Amendment on Genetically Modified Organisms to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;
- (f) Accession to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;
- (g) Accession to the Sofia and Cavtat Amendments to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

## **Chapter 7: Climate change**

**Recommendation 7.1:**

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should develop a law on climate change and an overall long-term strategy on climate action.

**Recommendation 7.2:**

The Government should:

- (a) Strengthen human capacities of the most relevant institutions, especially those participating in the National Climate Change Committee, by establishing in all participating ministries climate change units or climate focal points with a clear mandate for mainstreaming climate change in the relevant sectors;
- (b) Provide a stronger institutional framework to the national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory preparation process, which is currently implemented through international projects.

**Recommendation 7.3:**

The Government should:

- (a) Develop a national adaptation plan in response to climate change, covering all relevant sectors, including specific measures;
- (b) Develop a national disaster risk reduction strategy in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- (c) Estimate the costs of inaction, and where possible undertake cost-benefit analysis for different sectors;
- (d) Implement specific measures identified in the Vulnerability Assessment of the Forestry Sector, including a programme for the adaptation of forestry to climate change;

- (e) Conduct a specific study on the incidence of forest fires under changed climatic conditions in the country;
- (f) Address the issue of the increasing vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climate change;
- (g) Update and fully implement actions contained in the 2011 Climate Change Health Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, including intersectoral engagement and coordination with local governments, and improvement of information on climate change health adaptation.

Recommendation 7.4:

The Government should integrate climate change issues into overall energy planning and develop integrated climate and energy plans, which would include the gradual switch from the use of domestic lignite for electricity production to more sustainable and less polluting sources of energy, and the increase of the percentage of gross final energy consumption from renewable energies to meet the national target of 21 per cent by 2020.

Recommendation 7.5:

The Government should address GHG emissions from the waste sector through an integrated approach, including by improving the current waste management system.

Recommendation 7.6:

The Government should:

- (a) Encourage cities to become signatories to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and to subsequently prepare, adopt and implement sustainable energy (and climate) action plans;
- (b) Support at municipal level the implementation of measures that would achieve GHG emissions reduction, which are included in the 2011 Skopje Sustainable Energy Action Plan;
- (c) Advise the City of Skopje to integrate the updated 2011 Skopje Sustainable Energy Action Plan with the 2017 Resilient Skopje Climate Change Strategy, financed by the United Nations Development Programme, to avoid duplications and overlaps;
- (d) Advise municipalities to use the experience gained in the implementation of the 2015 Municipal Climate Change Strategies Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for the eight municipalities involved, including the project participatory process, in considering the preparation of their local climate change strategies and in raising the awareness of the local population.

Recommendation 7.7:

The Government should:

- (a) Regularly and systematically implement measures aimed at raising awareness on climate-change-related issues;
- (b) Ensure that climate-change-related issues are integrated into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula.

## **Chapter 8: Air protection**

Recommendation 8.1:

The Government should ensure sufficient financial and human resources for:

- (a) Regular maintenance and operation of the air quality monitoring network, including regular (every five years) recomposition of the network;
- (b) Accreditation of the existing calibration laboratory;

(c) Establishment of an accredited analytical laboratory for the regular analysis of contents of heavy metals and PAHs in particulate matter or outsourcing of this task on a regular basis.

Recommendation 8.2:

The Ministry of Health, through its Public Health Institute, in cooperation with the State Statistical Office and Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and other relevant stakeholders, should:

(a) Monitor population exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>, including in support of achieving SDG target 3.9 and monitoring the global indicator 3.9.1 (Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution);

(b) Implement an integrated environmental and health monitoring system with an adequate level of spatial resolution to enable monitoring of the implementation of policy measures on air pollution abatement and assessment of their effectiveness.

Recommendation 8.3:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should ensure the monitoring of the negative impacts of air pollution on ecosystems, based on a network of monitoring sites that is representative of their freshwater, natural and semi-natural habitats and forest ecosystem types, using a cost-effective and risk-based approach.

Recommendation 8.4:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should establish a system to monitor the implementation of policy documents on air protection, entrusting this task to a separate administrative unit that would regularly estimate the effectiveness and appropriateness of implemented measures and, based on this, update policy documents to improve air quality and achieve progress towards the achievement of SDG targets 3.9 and 11.6.

Recommendation 8.5:

The Ministry of Economy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, should:

(a) Introduce measures for renewal of the passenger vehicle fleet, favouring fuel economy through the “feebate” system of charges and rebates, whereby energy-efficient or environmentally friendly practices are rewarded while failure to adhere to such practices is penalized;

(b) Introduce a green public procurement system and advise national public institutions and municipalities to renew the public transport fleet, including by using the green public procurement system, favouring electric and gas-powered buses.

Recommendation 8.6:

The Government should introduce measures to improve energy efficiency and to stimulate changes towards using more sustainable fuels in the housing and energy sectors.

## **Chapter 9: Water management**

Recommendation 9.1:

The Government should allocate an adequate regular budget for remediation and maintenance of the water monitoring network to enable the systematic monitoring and assessment of the status of surface water and groundwater bodies in line with international and European Union practices.

Recommendation 9.2:

The Government should:

- (a) Improve data collection on groundwater and surface water abstraction and use;
- (b) Apply the water-user and polluter-pays principles for all water users and dischargers according to the 2008 Law on Waters, taking into account the needs of poor and vulnerable groups in the population;
- (c) Raise awareness of water-saving measures and provide water-saving technical devices;
- (d) Introduce domestic, municipal and industrial reuse and recycling of water, and rainwater collection for non-potable uses;
- (e) Ensure a special regime for the sanitary protection of sources of drinking water supply.

Recommendation 9.3:

The Government should:

- (a) Ensure rehabilitation of irrigation systems and expansion of the percentage of closed pipe systems in relation to open systems;
- (b) Provide measurement devices in irrigation systems for water quantity intake and water consumption by farmers and promote high-value, low-water-use crops;
- (c) Strengthen agricultural advice on different irrigation methods, selection of crops adapted to local boundary conditions and optimization of existing systems.

Recommendation 9.4:

The Government should:

- (a) Ensure the construction of wastewater treatment plants and sewage collection systems for cities over 100,000 p.e. as a priority and for municipalities over 10,000 p.e. as a secondary priority;
- (b) Ensure that the sewage collection systems focus on separating wastewater from storm water, with the storm water being returned to the hydrological cycle by infiltration;
- (c) Prevent the deterioration of the existing sewage collection systems, which should be repaired or renewed;
- (d) Ensure maintenance and operation of sewage collection systems;
- (e) Consider the establishment of decentralized sewage treatment systems in rural areas;
- (f) Ensure that industry applies appropriate wastewater treatment prior to discharge into water bodies according to national standards;
- (g) Close and remediate all dumpsites along river banks exposed to flooding and infiltration into groundwater.

Recommendation 9.5:

The Government should:

- (a) Ensure a sufficient buffer strip along rivers and lakes for agricultural lands exposed to erosion, and that relevant cultivation methods are applied to protect from erosion;
- (b) Ensure that ecological improvements on dams, such as fish ladders and fish ways, are considered and that the environmental flow below dams is set and inspected;
- (c) Consider more twinning arrangements with countries that have experience in implementing Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy (Water Framework Directive) and river basin management;

- (d) Establish reference conditions for water bodies to enable their classification.

Recommendation 9.6:

The Government should:

- (a) Ensure that flood plains are left open without further building, construction and land use involving water-polluting substances;
- (b) Consider preparing a handbook of flood-adaption planning and building in flood areas if it is unavoidable;
- (c) Raise public awareness of floods through reconnaissance and preparation for flood events, supported by flood preparedness and response exercises for those involved in flood management;
- (d) Ensure the maintenance of existing flood protection systems and consider the building of flood protection systems including precise flood predictions and hydrological forecasts;
- (e) Adapt the management of reservoirs to flooding;
- (f) Promote the increase of the percentage of pervious surfaces in urban areas by considering the introduction of specific minimum values for new urban developments and for the regeneration of existing parts of urban areas;
- (g) Promote the implementation of nature-based solutions in urban areas to increase adaptation to climate change.

Recommendation 9.7:

The Government should:

- (a) Provide sufficient financial and personnel resources to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to enable it to perform its role in water management;
- (b) Consider establishing comprehensive data management;
- (c) Consider concentrating all state investments in the water sector within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, including for irrigation and public water supply;
- (d) Ensure, by contract, subsequent maintenance and operation and consider fines in the case of infringement;
- (e) Consider transferring the Hydrometeorological Service to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to complete the transition of competences for water management.

Recommendation 9.8:

The Government should:

- (a) Establish as a pilot project, based on a proposal by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, a river basin management council for which a basin management plan is at the final drafting stage, and work out the modalities for the effective launch and functioning of the new institution by seeking support from other countries to benefit from similar experience;
- (b) Apply, in due time and taking into consideration the lessons learned, the tested working arrangements for establishing river basin management councils in the other designated river basins, based on proposals by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning;
- (c) Ensure that river basin management plans for the remaining river basins are developed;
- (d) Ensure that the National Water Council is operational.

## **Chapter 10: Waste and chemicals management**

### Recommendation 10.1:

The State Environmental Inspectorate should undertake relevant measures to stop environmentally harmful activities at non-compliant landfills.

### Recommendation 10.2:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should assess the efficiency and impacts of the existing legislation on extended producer responsibility and introduce extended producer responsibility for other waste streams, in particular waste textiles, waste oils, used tyres and end-of-life vehicles.

### Recommendation 10.3:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Adopt the draft national waste prevention plan to serve as the national policy on waste reduction, reuse and recycling;
- (b) Undertake, in cooperation with collective waste handlers, awareness-raising and information campaigns for manufacturers and consumers on reduction, reuse and recycling of urban waste;
- (c) Promote, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Finance, recycling and reuse of waste by domestic industry and manufacturers.

### Recommendation 10.4:

The Government should support the establishment of the regional waste management systems and take measures to speed up the construction of regional landfills.

### Recommendation 10.5:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and the State Statistical Office should:

- (a) Adjust their data collection methodologies and clearly delineate their tasks and roles, and propose the necessary amendments to the legislation related to data collection on waste;
- (b) Establish an expert group to agree on waste-related indicators, underlying statistics, data collection and reporting methods, to avoid overlap and the duplication of efforts, especially under conditions of limited financial resources and capacity.

### Recommendation 10.6:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should ensure the implementation of the activities necessary to bring the Waste Management Information System into operation, to facilitate the legally binding reporting of all obliged parties to the Ministry and reduce the burden for data validation, exchange, processing and publication of information.

## **Chapter 11: Biodiversity and protected areas**

### Recommendation 11.1:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

- (a) Implement the national biodiversity monitoring programme, with a special focus on rare and threatened flora, fungi and fauna species, plant communities and ecosystems, and invasive alien species;
- (b) Mobilize adequate financial resources to ensure the continuation of state programmes related to biodiversity monitoring and research in the long run;

(c) Complete the inventory and assessment of the status of threatened species, in cooperation with relevant academic and scientific research institutions and environmental civil society organizations;

(d) Adopt the Red List and corresponding Red Book(s), paying due account to the globally applied International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) methodology and criteria, and update the 2011 lists of strictly protected and protected species accordingly.

Recommendation 11.2:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, should:

(a) Implement research on forest ecosystems and habitats, in cooperation with relevant academic and scientific research institutions and environmental civil society organizations;

(b) Carry out a national inventory of forest resources, including scientific studies on the status of game species populations, for setting appropriate hunting quotas.

Recommendation 11.3:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Develop a national policy or a programme for wetlands conservation;

(b) Develop relevant action plans/programmes for ecosystems and species conservation;

(c) Mobilize adequate resources to ensure the implementation of the national policy or programme for wetlands conservation, as well as action plans/programmes for ecosystems and species conservation in the long run.

Recommendation 11.4:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning should:

(a) Complete the revaluation and reproclamation of existing protected areas;

(b) Proceed with the identification and valorization of areas with high potential for their future designation as Natura 2000 sites, and areas of key importance for the spatial coherence of the future national ecological network;

(c) Designate new protected areas, and, where deemed necessary, extend the territories of existing protected areas, with a focus on providing for adequate coverage of all main ecosystem types representative of the country, as well as the sufficient inclusion of habitats of all rare and threatened wildlife species.

Recommendation 11.5:

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and other relevant stakeholders, should:

(a) Establish effective coordination mechanisms with the involvement of all relevant actors for the coherent development and implementation of policies on biodiversity conservation and nature protection;

(b) Establish an effective coordination mechanism for issues related to payment for ecosystem services;

(c) Set up and ensure the operation of a national council for nature protection;

(d) Conduct regular training to develop the capacity of civil servants involved in biodiversity conservation and nature protection activities.

See also Recommendation 6.1 (a).