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The Ninth Environment for Europe

Ministerial Conference: organizational issues

Organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Environment for Europe Reform Plan sets out the provisions for the preparatory process and for the organization of Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I).

The secretariat prepared the present document, presenting the main organizational issues for the next Conference with a view to guiding the preparations for and the organization of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

The Committee on Environmental Policy will be invited to consider the document with a view to its adoption.



Introduction

1. The document presents a number of organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. In developing the document, relevant provisions stated in the Environment for Europe Reform Plan were taken into account (ECE/CEP/S/152 and Corr.1, annex I).
2. At the time of preparing the current document, the secretariat had not received formal confirmation regarding the hosting of the Conference. The deadlines indicated throughout the document were calculated based on the assumption that the Conference will be organized in the second week of October 2021.
3. The Committee on Environmental Policy will be invited to consider the document with a view to its adoption. Thereafter, the document will guide the preparations for and the organization of the Conference.

I. Participation

A. Governments

4. The Conference is open to all 56 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Other interested States Members of the United Nations may also participate as observers, subject to decision by the Committee on Environmental Policy. National delegations can include up to 10 persons. Governments are invited to include representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and of business in their national delegations, as appropriate.
5. Governments should each designate a national focal point, who will collect and consolidate all registration forms from national delegates and send them to the ECE secretariat. The list of nominated delegates should be submitted to the ECE secretariat by email (efe@un.org) together with their registration forms as soon as possible, but not later than **30 June 2021**.

B. Intergovernmental organizations

6. Intergovernmental organizations and other international organizations that participate regularly in ECE activities and in activities included in the Environment for Europe process are eligible to participate. Delegations from these organizations can include up to 10 persons. Representatives of these organizations should submit a registration form to the ECE secretariat by email (efe@un.org) by **30 June 2021**.

C. Non-governmental organizations

7. Up to 150 representatives of NGOs may be invited to attend a possible joint session with ministers at the Conference, out of which 30 places are reserved for NGOs from the host country, and up to 75 NGO representatives may be present at all other official meetings of the Conference, out of which 10 places are reserved for NGOs from the host country.
8. The European ECO-Forum will be invited to organize a nomination process and will form a delegation representing NGOs. Major international NGOs, such as Greenpeace, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Local Governments for Sustainability, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability and the World Wildlife Fund, can register directly with the ECE secretariat.

9. The NGO delegation of up to 75 persons to be present (on a rotational basis) at the official segments of the Conference can include up to 65 representatives of international and national NGOs from the ECE region (of which 56 seats are allocated for the participation of one NGO per ECE member State and 9 seats are reserved for international NGOs, NGO networks and experts actively involved in the preparatory process), and another 10 seats are reserved for representatives from national NGOs of the host country.

10. Selection and nomination of NGOs will be carried out according to the following criteria:

- (a) The organization should be an environmental NGO from the ECE region;
- (b) It should have expertise in the subjects included on the Conference agenda;
- (c) It should have international experience and be actively involved in the Environment for Europe process;
- (d) The selection should ensure balanced representation of the different parts of the ECE region;
- (e) Nominees should know at least one of the three official ECE languages (i.e., English, French or Russian).

11. The list of NGO delegates should be submitted to the ECE secretariat by email (efe@une.org) by **30 June 2021**. The ECE secretariat, in cooperation with the host country, will complete the registration process.

D. Business

12. Up to 100 representatives of business may be invited to attend a possible joint session with ministers at the Conference, out of which 20 places are reserved for business representatives from the host country, and up to 50 business representatives may be present at any given time at all official meetings, out of which 5 places are reserved for host country business representatives. Interested representatives from business should submit a registration form to the ECE secretariat by email (efe@un.org) by **30 June 2021**.

E. Other civil society representatives

13. Other representatives of civil society/major groups¹ whose activities are directly relevant to the Conference agenda may also participate. Eligible representatives of major groups should submit their registration forms to the ECE secretariat by email (efe@un.org) by **30 June 2021**.

F. Mass media

14. Representatives of the mass media should submit an accreditation form directly to the host country secretariat by **31 July 2021**.

15. Information on participation and registration will be available through the ECE website dedicated to the Environment for Europe process

¹ Business and industry; children and youth; farmers; indigenous people; local authorities; non-governmental organizations; scientific and technological community; women; workers and trade unions, as defined by Agenda 21, the plan of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3–14 June 1992. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>.

(<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/welcome.html>) by **31 March 2021** (180 days before the Conference).

II. Documents

16. The provisions of this section are based on the Environment for Europe Reform Plan, which stipulates that in order to reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme should be prepared by the ECE or another Environment for Europe partner, in close cooperation with other Environment for Europe partners. The official substantive documentation will thus comprise the pan-European assessment, provided that the Committee on Environmental Policy decides to produce it, and theme-specific reports. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released six weeks before the Conference (i.e., by Monday, **23 August 2021**). The Reform Plan also states that interested ECE member States, Environment for Europe partners and other stakeholders may produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the Environment for Europe process, which will be circulated as information documents.

17. Furthermore, the Environment for Europe Reform Plan provides for the following possible Conference outcomes: (a) a Chair's summary; (b) statements, initiatives, agreements or pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; (c) an agreed outcome of two pages on follow-up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference; (d) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the ECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference; and (e) assessment reports used in the preparation for the Conference or presented to the Conference and which are important for the implementation of the Conference's outcomes.

18. Accordingly, the Conference documents will be divided into: (a) official substantive documents; and (b) information documents. The outcome documents will be processed either as official substantive documents or as information documents, depending on their nature.

19. During the preparatory process, in order to save paper and make the process of distributing documentation more efficient, the ECE secretariat will not provide hard copies of meeting documents in the meeting room (exceptions will be made for meeting discussion documents prepared during or shortly before meetings). All relevant documents prepared by or submitted to the ECE secretariat will be posted on the ECE website. Therefore, the delegates are kindly asked to bring with them all the documents that they need for their work during the meetings, including reference documents and documents circulated specifically for meetings of the Committee on Environmental Policy and its Bureau. Participants wishing to distribute papers relevant to meetings are requested to bring the necessary number of copies.

A. Official substantive documents

20. Official substantive documents for possible action by Ministers (for example, signature, endorsement, approval, adoption or discussion) shall be submitted through and endorsed by the Committee on Environmental Policy.² The submission of official substantive

² According to the Environment for Europe Reform Plan, the annotated provisional agenda for the Conference should be approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-sixth session

documents to the Conference has to be approved by the Committee at its special session to be held in the week of 17–21 May 2021 (dates to be confirmed). Therefore, taking into account the requirements of the the Conference Services Division of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the deadlines for submitting these documents to the ECE secretariat are as follows:

(a) Documents prepared directly under the auspices of the Committee will be translated and reproduced by the Conference Services. The deadline for their submission is **8 March 2021**. These documents may not exceed a length of **8,500 words**. The original language can be English, French or Russian. If submitting documents in French or Russian, an adequate quality and editing should be ensured by the author to enable translation into the other two official languages of ECE by Conference Services;

(b) Documents prepared by other Environment for Europe partners should be submitted to the ECE secretariat in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian) in electronic form by **1 April 2021**, for reproduction in electronic format by Conference Services and posting on the official Committee on Environmental Policy website.

21. Organizations that wish to reproduce the documents in electronic format themselves should submit the documents to the ECE secretariat in electronic form in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian), or give the web reference where these documents can be viewed, for posting on the official Committee on Environmental Policy website by **1 April 2021**.

22. Official substantive documents approved by the February 2016 special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy and processed by the United Nations Conference Services will be posted on the website and distributed by email prior to the Conference according to the ECE distribution list (which includes national and international delegations, permanent missions and intergovernmental organizations) and the provisional list of Conference participants. The final deadline for processing official substantive documents by the United Nations Conference Services in time for the Conference is **26 July 2021**.

23. The formula “ECE/VENUE CITY NAME.CONF/2021/No.” will be used for official substantive document symbols. The ECE secretariat will issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents). Documents produced outside the ECE secretariat should be made available to delegates at the latest six weeks prior to the Conference, i.e., by **23 August 2021**.

24. The host country secretariat may wish to translate the official substantive documents of the Conference into the national language(s).

B. Information documents

25. Information documents are background, informational and analytical documents of direct relevance to the Conference agenda submitted by the Environment for Europe partners and other interested stakeholders.

26. The list of background, informational and analytical documents of direct relevance to the Conference agenda that are submitted by the Environment for Europe partners and other interested stakeholders will be made available for information to the special session of the Committee on Environmental Policy in May 2021. The final titles of these documents, as well as a reference to the website where they can be viewed, should be submitted to the ECE

(Geneva, 9–11 November 2020). Drafts of other official substantive documents should also be available for comments at the twenty-sixth session of the Committee.

secretariat by **8 March 2021**. Alternatively, the electronic version of these documents can be posted on the official Committee on Environmental Policy website.

27. The Conference aims to be a paperless event to the extent possible. Therefore, Conference delegates, including Environment for Europe partner organizations, are encouraged to disseminate materials in electronic version via the Internet, as feasible.

28. For ease of reference, the formula “ECE/VENUE CITY NAME.CONF/2021/INF/No.” will be used for information document symbols. The final deadline for processing information documents by the United Nations Conference Services in time for the Conference is **26 July 2021**.

29. The ECE secretariat will assign appropriate symbols to documents and issue a uniform cover page (to be used for finalizing the documents). The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of the information documents can also be posted on the ECE website dedicated to the Conference, size permitting.

30. Documents produced outside the ECE secretariat should be made available to delegates at the latest six weeks prior to the Conference, i.e., by **23 August 2021**. Submission in French or Russian as the original language is also possible, provided that an English version of an adequate quality is provided by the author to enable all delegates to consider the documents.

C. Conference outcomes

31. Regarding Conference outcomes, the Committee on Environmental Policy should be informed in advance of the Conference of any possible: (a) statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions; and (b) policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are intended to be presented to the Conference by interested countries of the ECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues.

32. In that regard, interested Environment for Europe actors should inform the Committee at its twenty-sixth session (Geneva, 9–11 November 2020) of such envisaged documents and make available the electronic version of the final drafts to the Committee for information in the three official ECE languages (English, French and Russian) at its special session in February 2016. The electronic versions (or the web reference where these documents can be viewed) of drafts of such documents should be submitted to the ECE secretariat for posting on the official Committee website by **1 April 2021**. The deadline for making the final draft documents available for the Conference is **23 August 2021**.

33. An agreed outcome of two pages on follow-up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference, will be prepared by the Committee in advance of the Conference.

34. A Chair’s summary will be produced during the Conference by the ECE secretariat in close collaboration with the host country secretariat and the relevant Environment for Europe partners. A draft of the Chair’s summary will be made available in English at the end of the Conference and the final edited version will be processed in English, French and Russian after the Conference.

III. Side events and exhibitions

35. An organizer of a side event may be a Government, an intergovernmental, international or non-governmental organization, the private sector or other major group. Organizers from the ECE region should be given preference.

36. Official delegates may not be invited to side events organized during the plenary sessions of the Conference or during official social events.

37. The theme and content of a side event should be a subject of direct relevance to the Conference agenda. Events should be conducted in at least one of the official ECE languages (English, French or Russian).

38. Completed registration forms for side events should be submitted to the host country secretariat by **30 April 2021**. All practical arrangements for side events are subject to the agreement made between the host country and the organizer.

39. The final list of side events should be available for the information of the Committee on Environmental Policy at its February 2016 special session.

40. Materials for exhibitions and side events should be shipped to the venue by the delegations themselves and should reach the venue by **20 September 2021**. Alternatively, delegations may bring them to the Conference venue upon their arrival (subject to the arrangements made between the host country and delegations). At the same time, the organizers of side events and exhibitions should keep in mind that the Conference aims to be a paperless event with a view to diminishing the mass distribution of printed materials.

IV. Accommodation

41. The designated national focal point may wish to assume the responsibility for hotel booking. Information on hotel booking will be available through the official site of the Environment for Europe process and the host country secretariat by **31 March 2021**.

V. Further information

42. For information on documents, participation and registration please contact the ECE secretariat via email at efe@un.org.

43. For information on press accreditation, meeting venue, local transport, hotel booking, exhibition, side events and other questions related to local logistics, please contact the host country secretariat.³

³ The contact details of the host country secretariat will be communicated at a later time and posted on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website.

Annex

Summary of major deadlines for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

A. Registration

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Deadline for submission</i>
Government delegations	Via email to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
Intergovernmental organizations	Via email to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
NGOs	European ECO-Forum will submit the list of NGO delegation to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
Major international NGOs	Via email to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
Business	Via email to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
Other civil society representatives	Via email to the ECE secretariat	30 June 2021
Mass media	Via email (or other means to be determined) to the host country secretariat	31 July 2021

B. Documentation

<i>Languages, format and purpose of submission</i>	<i>Type of processing or reproduction to be carried out</i>	<i>Deadlines for submission</i>
Substantive documents		
In English, ^a for the Committee on Environmental Policy special session in May 2021	For processing by United Nations Conference Services	8 March 2021
In English, French and Russian, for the Committee on Environmental Policy special session in May 2021	For reproduction in electronic format by the United Nations Conference Services	1 April 2021
In English, French and Russian, for the Committee on Environmental Policy special session in May 2021	For posting on the Committee on Environmental Policy website	1 April 2021
In English, ^b for the Conference	For processing by the United Nations Conference Services	26 July 2021

<i>Languages, format and purpose of submission</i>	<i>Type of processing or reproduction to be carried out</i>	<i>Deadlines for submission</i>
In English, French and Russian, for the Conference	For reproduction in electronic format by the United Nations Conference Services	23 August 2021
In English, French and Russian for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	23 August 2021
Information documents		
In English, ^c final title and electronic versions, for the Committee on Environmental Policy special session in May 2021	For compiling the list of information documents and posting on the Committee on Environmental Policy website	8 March 2021
In English, ^d final versions for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	23 August 2021
Conference outcomes		
In English, ^e draft electronic versions, for the Committee on Environmental Policy special session in May 2021	For posting on the Committee on Environmental Policy website	1 April 2021
In English, ^f draft electronic versions approved by Committee on Environmental Policy for the Conference	For posting on the Conference website	23 August 2021

^a Submission in French or Russian as the original language is also possible. An adequate quality and editing should be ensured by the author for such documents to enable their translation into the other two official languages of ECE by the United Nations Conference Services.

^b Idem.

^c Submission in French or Russian as an original language is also possible, provided that an English version of an adequate quality is provided by the author to enable all delegates to consider such documents.

^d Idem.

^e Idem.

^f Idem.

C. Side events and exhibitions

<i>Registration format</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Deadline for submission</i>
Completed registration forms for side events	Via email (or other means to be determined) to the host country secretariat	30 April 2021