

**Progress report regarding the status of ratification of the first and second amendments to the Espoo Convention and its Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol**

***Dear all,***

Regarding the status of ratification of the first and second amendments to the Espoo Convention, I would like to inform you that interministerial review concerning the I and II amendments has been finished and these documents newly submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers to consider the issue of approving these amendments by the Republic of Azerbaijan. Currently, the process is at the final approval stage. We hope the finalization of this procedure soon.

Let me also kindly inform the Parties that Azerbaijan adopted Environmental Impact Assessment Law on 12th June 2018, after the 2014-2017 capacity building activities on Environmental Impact Assessment/Strategic Environmental Assessment for bringing about a conformity national legislation with Espoo Convention and its Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol with the technical assistance provided by UNECE and EU EaP GREEN Program. Strategic Environmental Assessment newly was integrated into the national legal system with this Law and needs further capacity building activities for effective and full domestic application. Taking into account this circumstance, ratification of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol can be considered after the national Strategic Environmental Assessment system is launched effectively at the national level and meets international obligations respectively.

I hereby would like to draw your attention to the important fact in the Caspian region too in terms of progressive steps towards the transboundary application of Environmental Impact Assessment. Thus, it is worth to mention that the Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a trans-boundary Context to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea - Tehran Convention was signed by the Caspian Sea littoral countries on 20th July 2018, in Moscow under their own political will which showed the importance of such an agreement on trans-boundary Environmental Impact Assessment in the Caspian Sea. It should be noted that during the procedure the Protocol was officially consulted with the Espoo Convention to reassure its compliance with the Convention too.

Thank you for your attention.