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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

REPORT ON THE THIRD SESSION
(from 20 to 22 May 1996)

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Introduction

1. The third session of the Committee on Environmental Policy took place in Geneva from 20 to 22 May 1996. Mr. I. TOKES (Hungary) chaired the meeting.
2. The meeting was attended by the delegations of: Albania; Armenia; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Kazakhstan; Latvia; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United States of America.
3. The session was attended by representatives of the European Community (EC).
4. Representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Environment Agency (EEA), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also attended.
5. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented: Environmental NGOs Coalition; European Environmental Bureau (EEB); International Chamber of Commerce (ICC); International Council of Environmental Law (ICEL); Regional Environmental Center (REC); and World Conservation Union (IUCN).

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Committee adopted the agenda as contained in document ECE/CEP/29.

II. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT ON THE SPECIAL SESSION

7. The Committee adopted the report on the special session as contained in document ECE/CEP/18.

III. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FIFTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF CONCERN TO THE COMMITTEE

8. Mr. K. BÄRLUND, the Director of the Environment and Human Settlements Division, drew the attention of the Committee to the major discussions held and the decisions adopted by the Commission at its fifty-first session of relevance to the work of the Committee. The Commission had reaffirmed that environmental cooperation was a priority activity. The text of the decisions of the Commission (E/ECE(51)/L.11) was distributed among the delegations.
9. The Director also informed the Committee about the ongoing work on setting priorities within ECE. Under the guidance of the Bureau of the Commission, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Strategic Directions and Efficiency would, in a first phase, by mid-July, further analyse the sectoral responses to the questionnaires, work on horizontal issues and meet with the Bureaux of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSB). During the second phase, by the end of September, the Commission's Bureau would sum up the situation and prepare

the presentation of the results. During the third phase, by mid-November, intensive consultations, including meetings with the PSB Bureaux, would be continued. Draft conclusions on the exercise should be available at the beginning of January 1997. In April 1997, during its fifty-second session, the Commission is expected to take decisions on these issues based on the Ad Hoc Working Group's report.

10. The Committee took note of this information and of the results of the fifty-first session of the Commission of concern to it, and decided to bear them in mind when discussing the various agenda items.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE BUREAU BETWEEN THE SPECIAL SESSION AND THE THIRD SESSION

11. The Chairman reported on the activities of the Bureau of the Committee between the special session and the third session (CEP/R.14). The Committee took note of the contribution of the Bureau to the documents for its third session.

V. STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY-MAKING. PROGRAMME OF WORK

12. The Director of the Environment and Human Settlements Division, Mr. K. BÄRLUND, outlined the work of the Committee and its Bureau, as well as organizational changes in the secretariat. The Environment and Human Settlements Division had been reorganized in December 1995. The Division was presently composed of four teams: Environmental Policy, Air Pollution, Environmental Performance Reviews and Human Settlements. Some professionals worked for two teams so that the expertise of the secretariat could be used more effectively. In addition, divisional focal points had been established for sustainable development, transport and environment, and environmental technology. Also, measures had been taken to promote cooperation with other Divisions. The organizational changes were aimed at servicing the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and the Committee on Human Settlements and implementing their work programmes more efficiently.

13. Mr. BÄRLUND drew the attention of the Committee to the three proposed strategic pillars for its work: (i) participation in the two major international cooperative processes, the "Environment for Europe" process and the regional promotion of Agenda 21; (ii) the development and carrying-out of environmental performance reviews; and (iii) the development of and follow-up to international environmental legislation as described in the discussion note by the Bureau (CEP/R.15). The Bureau had taken these pillars into account in the preparation of the Committee's draft programme of work for the years to come, starting from 1996 (CEP/R.17). In addition, Mr. BÄRLUND encouraged the Committee to use its Bureau to prepare its work and monitor the implementation of its programme of work as proposed in document CEP/R.14, paragraphs 2 and 3.

A. General debate on the strategic role of the Committee in regional environmental policy-making

14. In the ensuing debate on the strategic role of the Committee in regional environmental policy-making, several delegations supported the proposed role

for the Committee based on the three strategic pillars and, consequently, the structure of the Committee's programme of work. Several delegations also noted with satisfaction the organizational changes within the secretariat, and the work of the Bureau and the secretariat in preparing documentation for this meeting. The Committee considered its value-adding function in: the regional promotion of Agenda 21; the "Environment for Europe" process, in particular its work in the further implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe; and the provision of support to the regional environmental conventions. The note on core policy issues was deemed to provide good guidance to the planning of the Committee's future work programmes. Some delegations linked the consideration of the Committee's strategic role concretely to the next programme of work and to the resources needed at the secretariat and by the Governments to implement it in 1996/1997. The Committee also considered the role of its Bureau. The Committee agreed on the Bureau's role as described below, on the understanding that the Committee itself would remain the major body for debate and decision-making.

15. In the light of the debate, the Committee:

(a) Took note of the discussion note by the Bureau on the strategic role of the Committee in international environmental policy-making and decided to take it into account when considering the programme of work and other relevant items on the agenda;

(b) Agreed that the Bureau, in close cooperation with the secretariat, should deal with the preparations for and the follow-up to the Committee's decision-making. The Bureau should submit its views and proposals on major issues to the Committee in its position papers and through the reports on its meetings. The Bureau should, in particular:

- (i) Monitor the implementation of the Committee's programme of work between the sessions of the Committee;
- (ii) Develop procedures and methods for evaluating the outcome of the implementation of the Committee's decisions;
- (iii) Monitor the use of resources and consider opportunities for mobilizing them;
- (iv) Make decisions on operational matters as entrusted by the Committee;
- (v) Function as a coordinator between the Committee on Environmental Policy and other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the Bureau of the Commission;
- (vi) Cooperate and coordinate work on the environment with relevant major international governmental and non-governmental organizations (e.g. the Bureau of the OECD Environmental Policy Committee, the Commission of the European Communities, the European Environment Agency).

B. Possible action by the Committee regarding the Environmental Programme for Europe

16. The Committee considered the note by the Bureau on the follow-up to the Environmental Programme for Europe (EPE) (CEP/R.16). The secretariat informed the Committee about the support expressed by the Bureau of the Committee on Human Settlements, at its informal consultation on 9 May 1996, for a joint workshop on sustainable consumption patterns. The delegation of Austria introduced a draft programme for a workshop on sustainable consumption patterns prepared with the assistance of the secretariat (CEP/R.25).

17. The secretariat circulated a letter by the Chairman of the Committee on Energy supporting future cooperation between the two Committees on the possible development of a European energy conservation strategy. In addition, the Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project informed the delegations about the progress made under the Project. He called for a division of work between different organizations dealing with energy and environment issues. He encouraged small but concrete steps to support energy conservation instead of drafting broad strategies.

18. Pursuant to an EPE recommendation, the delegation of Denmark introduced a proposal to prepare a European programme to phase out leaded petrol by 2010 taking into account specific domestic conditions. It also proposed the establishment of a task force for this purpose and offered to lead it. The open-ended task force should be serviced by the ECE secretariat. In particular, the Commission of the European Communities and the World Bank were invited to participate in the work.

19. A representative of the European Environment Agency presented an informal note on the preparatory work to develop the next pan-European state of the environment report as a follow-up to the Dobris Assessment. He stressed the role that this activity would play in the overall assessment of the progress made in the EPE implementation, and the Agency's readiness to cooperate closely in this respect with the Committee on Environmental Policy and the ECE secretariat. He invited the delegations to transmit their written comments on the proposed scope for the assessment, the outline of the core set of indicators, and possible priority actions to be addressed in the post-Dobris report.

20. A representative of REC in Budapest introduced an informal paper on cooperation possibilities between REC and the Committee in the EPE implementation, particularly with regard to the review of the Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making and economic instruments in environmental policies. A representative of the Commission of the European Communities informed the Committee about the recent developments in the work to establish new regional environment centre(s).

21. In the ensuing discussion the results of screening the EPE recommendations were noted with satisfaction, but further prioritization was also requested. Reference was made to the topicality of the EPE recommendations on agriculture, transport and waste management, and it was proposed that the Bureau of the Committee should consider developing proposals for action on these issues. It was stressed that, when considering

further the concrete work on the proposed screened priority activities, the Committee should keep in mind the available resources and the need for additional resources, both budgeted and extra-budgetary, for the other parts of its work programme, and the fact that the work under these topics should not duplicate efforts by other bodies.

22. The Committee considered the proposed priority actions for the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe (CEP/R.16) to be important. In the light of the discussion on available resources and taking into account the need to avoid unnecessary duplication and concentrate on activities with added value, the Committee:

- (a) Decided to take the note by the Bureau and the views expressed at this meeting into account when considering its draft programme of work (CEP/R.17) and to revise it accordingly;
- (b) Welcomed the organization of a workshop on compliance monitoring and enforcement issues in early 1998 (subactivity 01.3.6 in the work programme);
- (c) Welcomed the organization of a workshop in autumn 1997 on economic instruments (subactivity 01.1.4);
- (d) Agreed to examine in cooperation with the Energy Committee the possible development of a draft European energy conservation strategy and to revert to this issue at its next meeting (subactivity 01.1.3);
- (e) Welcomed the proposal by Austria to organize a workshop in late 1997/early 1998 on sustainable consumptions patterns (subactivity 01.1.5);
- (f) Agreed to start work on the preparation of a proposal for a European strategy to phase out leaded petrol (subactivity 01.1.1);
- (g) Agreed on the assessment and reporting procedures presented in document CEP/R.16, chapter II, noting that close cooperation between ECE and EEA was needed in this work (subactivity 01.1.1 in the programme of work). The Committee also took note of the EEA work plan regarding the reporting to the 1998 Ministerial Conference on progress made since the Sofia Conference.

C. Programme of work and resource needs

23. The Committee considered the draft programme of work proposed by the Bureau (CEP/R.17). The secretariat provided additional detailed information on resource requirements for the period June 1996 - May 1997 for the activities outlined in the draft work programme and on participation in intergovernmental meetings convened under the environmental programme during May 1994 - April 1996. The Committee considered in depth the draft programme of work after consideration of environmental performance reviews under items 6 and regional environmental conventions under item 7. Some delegations proposed that the Bureau should consider further the structure of the future work programmes and the reporting of resource requirements and other financial issues in this context.

24. The Committee approved the programme of work for 1996-1998 (annex I), as amended, and agreed to establish priorities for the entire programme by the end of June 1996, through a written procedure to be conducted by the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

A. ECE environmental performance reviews

25. The Committee considered the Bureau's proposal on the ECE environmental performance reviews (EPRs) including the need for extrabudgetary resources for the successful implementation of EPRs (CEP/R.18), and the secretariat's proposal on the terms of reference for the ECE group on environmental performance reviews (CEP/R.19). In addition, Mr. B. LONG of the OECD secretariat described OECD practices in EPRs. In the ensuing discussion the preparatory work done by the Bureau and the secretariat was noted with satisfaction.

26. The Committee took note of document CEP/R.18 and agreed to give further consideration to the matters addressed therein in the context of the ongoing effort to harmonize the methods and organizational principles used in such reviews with OECD.

27. The Committee adopted the proposal to include EPRs in its programme of work as a continuing project. It was decided that the Committee would make the final decisions on the countries to be reviewed based on proposals by the Bureau. The Committee also decided that at the most two to three countries would be reviewed per year, that the Committee would not, for the time being, establish a separate EPR group, and that, consequently, the peer reviews would be conducted by the Committee.

28. The Committee took note of the preparations for the ongoing ECE review of Slovenia and the review of Belarus undertaken in cooperation with OECD, and decided that the next ECE EPRs would be conducted in Albania and the Republic of Moldova. The Committee would select more countries to be reviewed at its next meeting.

B. Environmental performance review of Estonia

29. The report on the Ad Hoc Meeting on the Pilot ECE Environmental Performance Review of Estonia (CEP/R.20) was distributed among the delegations. The Committee took note of it.

C. Environmental performance review of Bulgaria

30. The report on the ECE/OECD Workshop on the results of the pilot OECD environmental performance review of Bulgaria (CEP/R.21) was distributed among the delegations. The Committee took note of it.

VII. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS

31. A summary note on progress in the implementation of the ECE environmental conventions prepared by the secretariat (CEP/R.22) was distributed among the delegations.

32. Mr. R. FORT (Norway) presented the outcome of the fifth meeting of the Signatories to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (CEP/WG.3/4). He also invited all countries to participate actively in the preparation of the first meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which would be held in Oslo (Norway) in summer 1997.

33. Mr. J. ZUREK (Poland), Chairman of the Meeting of the Signatories to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, presented the results of the fifth meeting of the Signatories (CEP/WG.4/4).

34. Mr. M. VARELA (Spain), Chairman of the Meeting of the Working Party on Water Problems, reported on the progress made by the Working Party at its ninth session in preparing the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (CEP/WP.1/4). The Committee welcomed the offer by Finland to host the first meeting of the Parties in 1997.

35. The secretariat informed the Committee about the preparation of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the preparation of a draft convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making, which would be held in Geneva from 17 to 19 June 1996.

36. The secretariat drew the attention of the Committee to the progress made in the implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and, in particular, to the negotiations on three more protocols to the Convention (CEP/R.22, paras. 9-11). The Committee was also informed about the recent exchange of information specifically on air pollution issues between ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

37. In the ensuing discussion on regional environmental conventions the delegations of Armenia, Croatia, Kazakstan and Uzbekistan reported on progress made in the ratification of the ECE environmental conventions. On behalf of the delegation of Turkey, the secretariat informed the Committee about the workshop on sustainable water-supply in cities to be organized in October 1996 in Turkey.

38. In the light of the progress made in the implementation of the EIA, the Water and the Industrial Accidents Conventions, and taking into account the information provided on air pollution issues, the Committee:

(a) Took note of the reports of the recent sessions of the Signatories to the EIA Convention, the Signatories to the Industrial Accidents Convention, and the Working Party on Water Problems (CEP/WG.3/4, CEP/WG.4/4, CEP/WP.1/4);

(b) Endorsed the draft work-plans drawn up under the three conventions (CEP/WG.3/4, annex; CEP/WG.4/4, annex; CEP/WP.1/4, annex I), and approved their implementation subject to the availability of resources and the results of the Committee's priority setting;

(c) Adopted the Guidelines on water-quality monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers as set out in CEP/WP.1/R.13 and Add.1 and R.14, the

Recommendations to the ECE Governments on special measures to prevent, control and reduce groundwater pollution from chemical storage facilities and waste-disposal sites as set out in CEP/SEM.1/3, and the Guidelines on the control of water pollution from point sources as set out in CEP/WP.1/R.4/Rev.1 with the amendments contained in annex II to document CEP/WP.1/4, and approved the publication of these Guidelines and Recommendations in all three ECE working languages in the Water Series;

(d) Expressed its gratitude to those Governments that had provided or pledged financial assistance to enable experts from countries in transition to attend workshops, seminars and task force meetings; and invited Governments to make further contributions in order to support the activities for the efficient implementation of the conventions, and to support the participation of experts from countries in transition in meetings under the conventions, through the Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT);

(e) Called upon ECE member States and the European Community, if they had not already done so, to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, as soon as possible, with the Depositary as referred to in the conventions and in the protocols to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;

(f) Welcomed the offer by Turkey to organize a workshop on sustainable water-supply in cities;

(g) Took note of the information about the implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

VIII. MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS IN SPECIFIC AREAS

A. Activities of other Principal Subsidiary Bodies

39. A note on major environmental activities under other ECE work programmes prepared by the secretariat (CEP/R.23) was distributed among the delegations.

B. Activities of other United Nations bodies, international organizations and institutions

40. Written information, submitted by UNCTAD, was distributed among the delegations.

C. Environment and economics

41. The report on the sixth session of the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics (CEP/WG.2/4) was distributed among the delegations. The Committee took note of the report and the work-plan of the Joint Working Group.

IX. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FOURTH SESSION

42. The Committee elected its Bureau: Mr. I. TOKES (Hungary), Chairman; Mr. R. FORT (Norway), Ms. M. GOMEZ (Spain), Mr. H. LIIV (Estonia), Mr. B. MUEHLING (United States), Mr. M. SLOKAR (Slovenia), Mr. J. REYNOLDS (United Kingdom) and Mr. Y. YUDINTSEV (Russian Federation), Vice-Chairpersons.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

43. The Committee decided to schedule its special session tentatively from 20 to 22 January 1997. Major issues to be considered would be the ECE exercise on priorities, preparations for the 1997 meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, further work on environmental performance reviews and further action on energy conservation.

44. A tentative schedule of meetings under the auspices of the Committee covering the period up to its fourth session is contained in annex II below.

45. Mr. M. LEES, of the International Committee for Economic Reform and Cooperation, informed the Committee on its goals and activities, in particular the Ministerial meeting to be held in Helsinki (Finland) from 30 May to 1 June 1996.

Annex I

PROGRAMME OF WORK
(1996-1998)

SUBPROGRAMME 01 - ENVIRONMENT

Pressure on the environment is presently exceeding its carrying capacity. This means that the current development is not sustainable in the long term. Recognizing the need to respect the limits of tolerance of the natural and man-made environment, and of human health, the ultimate goal of the Committee on Environmental Policy is to help bring down environmental loads throughout the region to levels which will not cause any significant harmful effects nor compromise environmental conditions for future generations.

Within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe "the environment" is a priority area. The Committee on Environmental Policy plays the key policy role in this field. All the activities included in this programme of work will promote the regional implementation of Agenda 21.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 01.1: "ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE" PROCESS AND REGIONAL PROMOTION OF AGENDA 21

Pursuant to the Declaration adopted at the third Ministerial Conference at Sofia, the "Environment for Europe" process remains an essential political framework for cooperation on environmental protection in Europe. The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy will oversee this process, in close cooperation with relevant agencies, organizations and institutions. The Sofia Conference entrusted the Committee on Environmental Policy with specific tasks to assess and report on progress in the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe, screen the Programme elements, promote public participation and prepare for the next Ministerial Conference. Based on the screening of the individual elements of the Environmental Programme for Europe, new subactivities on energy conservation and on the development of sustainable consumption patterns have been included in this part of the programme. In addition, the implications of the screening process have been taken into account in other relevant parts of the work programme.

Agenda 21 constitutes a useful additional political umbrella for some ongoing environmental activities (e.g. preparing regional legally binding instruments) and provides an impetus for these and some new activities (e.g. environmental performance reviews) taking into account the 1994 ECE Action Plan. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is the global body that monitors the implementation of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The General Assembly will evaluate the results of the UNCED follow-up and decide on future work at its special session in 1997. The need to decentralize the follow-up in the future has been recognized and a decision on the subject will be taken in 1997. ECE should be prepared to assume a role in the implementation of Agenda 21 at a regional level, if the General Assembly so decides.

01.1.1 Implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe

Description: The Sofia Conference endorsed the Environmental Programme for Europe (EPE) and invited the Committee on Environmental Policy to assess and report on progress in the implementation of the Programme. The Programme addresses some of the findings of the "Europe's Environment: The Dobris Assessment" report and highlights a number of long-term environmental priorities at a pan-European level. The Sofia Conference also endorsed the ECE Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making (ECE/CEP/24) and invited the Committee to review their implementation in 1997.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee on Environmental Policy, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency, will assess the implementation of the Environmental Programme for Europe. The Committee will be kept informed of the intermediate results of the Agency's post-Dobris assessment. The Committee will take on a policy-oriented role in this assessment. In addition, the Committee will solicit contributions from other ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies, and inputs from the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and a number of other international organizations and institutions of relevance to the Environmental Programme for Europe. The Committee will review, in cooperation with environmental NGOs and the Regional Environmental Center in Budapest, the experience of member countries in the implementation of the Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making. This exercise will provide input for the negotiations on a convention (see 01.3.1). A report on progress in the implementation of the Programme, including a summary of the review of the implementation of the Guidelines, will be submitted to the 1998 Ministerial Conference.

In coordination with the ongoing work on heavy metals under the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, an open-ended Task Force led by Denmark will prepare a proposal for a European strategy to phase out leaded petrol, for consideration by the Committee on Environmental Policy and possible submission to the 1998 Conference.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.1.2 Regional promotion of Agenda 21

Description: Following the 1997 meeting of the General Assembly, the United Nations regional commissions might be expected to take on a bigger role in reviewing region-wide progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and in reporting on it to CSD. The Committee on Environmental Policy should prepare options on how to meet that possible request without interfering with the national and other reporting obligations to CSD.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee on Environmental Policy will consider, at its fourth session, concrete proposals on its possible role in reviewing

and assessing regional progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 prepared by its Bureau in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Duration: continuous.

01.1.3 European energy conservation strategy

Description: Energy policies increasingly focus on the development of technology programmes for higher energy efficiency and renewable energy. They also aim to introduce or improve economic instruments to allocate the full environmental and economic costs of energy use. In the countries with economies in transition too, efforts towards sustainable economic development are expected to incorporate higher energy efficiency, including changes in consumer behaviour. The Sofia Conference endorsed several recommendations regarding improved energy efficiency and renewable energy which are included in the Environmental Programme for Europe. One of the key recommendations of the Programme annexed to the Sofia Ministerial Declaration is to take measures to ensure that all European countries reach a high level of energy efficiency by the year 2010.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee on Environmental Policy, in cooperation with the Committee on Energy, will examine the possible development of a draft European energy conservation strategy making full use of the expertise available from and relevant documentation prepared by the subsidiary bodies of the two Committees, by the Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project and by the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution as well as other appropriate bodies outside ECE. The Committee on Environmental Policy, at its special session in January 1997, will decide on details of the further work in the light of an informal meeting of environmental and energy experts to be convened before the sixth session of the Committee on Energy in autumn 1996, and a decision of the Committee on Energy.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.1.4 Environment and economics

Description: Since 1990, the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics, under two ECE Principal Subsidiary Bodies, the Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments and the Committee on Environmental Policy, has considered and promoted economic instruments to further environmental policy, with special emphasis on countries with economies in transition. At its sixth session in 1996, the Joint Working Group expressed its readiness to the Committee on Environmental Policy to assume responsibilities in the preparation of the 1998 Ministerial Conference on matters related to environment and economics.

Work to be undertaken: The Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics will undertake the activities set out in its work-plan (CEP/WG.2/4, annex II). These concern, in particular, the assessment of the environmental and economic situation in countries with economies in transition, the use of economic instruments for environmental policies, the pricing of natural

resources, and encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises to adopt a more environmentally sound approach to their activities. The Joint Working Group will report on progress to the Committee on Environmental Policy and to the Senior Economic Advisers. The Joint Working Group will organize a workshop in autumn 1997, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and in coordination with the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe, environmental NGOs and the Regional Environmental Center in Budapest, to review the progress made by countries with economies in transition in the application of the OECD "Guidelines and considerations for the use of economic instruments in environmental policies" as recommended by the joint ECE/OECD Ad Hoc Meeting in 1991.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.1.5 Sustainable consumption patterns

Description: The Environmental Programme for Europe encourages the integration of environmental considerations into decision-making in all key sectors and the promotion of partnerships between ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other major groups. It furthermore encourages the necessary changes in consumption patterns and individual lifestyles through awareness raising, technical regulations and economic incentives. Taking into account the multifaceted nature of the subject of sustainable consumption patterns and the various activities under way in other international organizations, the Committee will concentrate on a limited number of issues which have not received adequate attention in any other forum (e.g. ways of strengthening positive consumption features, regulations and incentives to secure opportunities for environmentally sound recreation, initiatives to promote sustainable transport at a local level).

Work to be undertaken: The Committee will organize a workshop in Austria in late 1997/early 1998, in cooperation with the Committee on Human Settlements and with the participation of representatives of central Governments, local and regional authorities, consumer organizations and environmental NGOs, to consider specific issues for the promotion of sustainable consumption patterns on the basis of document CEP/R.25. The results of the relevant activities of OECD, such as the outcome of the workshop on public procurement to be held in February 1997, CSD and UNEP will be taken into account. The outcome of the workshop will be submitted to the 1998 Ministerial Conference.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.1.6 Preparations for the 1998 Ministerial Conference

Description: The Environment Ministers at Sofia acknowledged the offer of Denmark to host the fourth Ministerial Conference in May 1998.

Work to be undertaken:

- (a) The Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe", established at the special session of the Committee

in January 1996, is responsible for the substantive preparations for the 1998 Ministerial Conference. The Working Group will serve as the central coordinating body for the further development of the "Environment for Europe" process. It will convene its first meeting in spring 1997. The Working Group will submit the documents prepared under its auspices or in cooperation with other international organizations or institutions, including the draft ministerial declaration, to the 1998 Ministerial Conference for consideration and possible adoption. It will keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress.

(b) The Executive Committee for the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group, also established at the special session of the Committee in January 1996, will prepare the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group before the first meeting of this Working Group.

The Ad Hoc Working Group and the Executive Committee will be serviced by the ECE secretariat. The preparation of the 1998 Conference in Denmark will be coordinated with the preparation of the 1999 WHO Conference on Health and Environment.

Duration: 1996-1998.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 01.2: ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Description: The Committee on Environmental Policy will review the performance of ECE countries which are non-members of OECD in meeting domestic environmental policy objectives and relevant international commitments. The environmental performance reviews also serve the Environmental Programme for Europe and help to monitor national progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. The aim is to carry out two to three reviews a year, extrabudgetary contributions permitting. At the ECE secretariat the team for environmental performance reviews is now fully operational. The extrabudgetary needs in cash and/or in kind are about US\$ 75,000 for each review.

Work to be undertaken:

- (a) The review of Slovenia will be carried out in 1996/early 1997;
- (b) The review of Belarus will be carried out in 1996/early 1997, in cooperation with OECD;
- (c) Cooperation with OECD will be continued with a view to harmonizing the methods and organizational principles used in reviews;
- (d) The Committee on Environmental Policy selected Albania and the Republic of Moldova to be reviewed in 1996/1997, as proposed by the secretariat. The Committee on Environmental Policy will select more countries to be reviewed at its special session in January 1997.

Duration: continuous.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 01.3: REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

01.3.1 Preparation of a draft convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making

Description: Effective public participation is the foundation for successful environmental policy and management. The Sofia Conference endorsed the ECE Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making. Moreover, the Ministers urged the Committee on Environmental Policy to consider the drafting of a regional convention on the same subject.

Work to be undertaken: The Ad Hoc Working Group, established at the special session of the Committee in January 1996, will prepare a draft convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making. The Working Group will report on progress to the Committee. The Committee will finalize the draft convention to be open for signature, if possible, at the 1998 Ministerial Conference.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.3.2 Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Description: The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context was signed in 1991. The Signatories to the Convention were entrusted with the interim implementation of the Convention. The Convention is expected to enter into force in 1997.

Work to be undertaken: The Meeting of the Signatories will undertake the activities set out in its work-plan (CEP/WG.3/4, annex). These concern, in particular, the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention, the strengthening of the capability of future Parties to comply with the obligations under the Convention, the maintenance and updating of the ECE database on environmental impact assessment and preparation for the first meeting of the Parties in 1997.

Duration: 1996-1997.

01.3.3 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Description: The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes was signed in 1992. The Working Party on Water Problems was entrusted with the interim implementation of the Convention. The Convention is expected to enter into force in 1996.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Water Problems will undertake the activities set out in its work-plan (CEP/WP.1/4, annex). Its priority areas of work cover the monitoring and analysis of policies and strategies, including international agreements, for the protection and use of

transboundary waters, the assessment and monitoring of transboundary waters, the exchange of information and experience in the use of economic and financial instruments and in water-demand management, and the preparation of for the first meeting of the Parties in early 1997.

Duration: 1996-1997.

01.3.4 Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Description: The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was signed in 1992. In February 1996, the Meeting of the Signatories decided to strengthen international cooperation on the prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents in the ECE region pending the entry into force of the Convention.

Work to be undertaken: The Meeting of the Signatories will undertake the activities set out in its work-plan (CEP/WG.4/4, annex). These concern, in particular, the promotion of the designation of points of contact for industrial accident notification and mutual assistance, and past industrial accidents. With the assistance of the two ECE regional industrial accident coordinating centres, it will enhance capacity building in countries with economies in transition. It will also develop guidelines or carry out studies on criteria for the identification of hazardous activities or the classification of hazardous substances.

Duration: 1996-1998.

01.3.5 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

Description: The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was signed in 1979 and entered into force in 1983. In addition, Parties have drawn up protocols concerning the control of emissions of sulphur, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds and the financing of the international research programme on emissions, monitoring and modelling. Moreover, five cooperative programmes for assessing and monitoring the effects of air pollution are in operation. The Parties to the Convention and its protocols will meet and work as agreed in the work-plans for the implementation of the Convention approved by the Executive Body to the Convention (the 1996 work-plan is annexed to document ECE/EB.AIR/46). Negotiations on three new protocols to the Convention are scheduled to start in 1996 (protocols on heavy metals, persistent organic compounds and a second step on nitrogen compounds using a multi-pollutant approach).

Work to be undertaken: The secretariat will inform the Committee on Environmental Policy of the implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and the progress in the negotiations of three new protocols.

Duration: continuous.

01.3.6 Support to the regional environmental conventions

Description: The Committee on Environmental Policy will consider measures to speed up the ratification of regional environmental conventions and protocols and will assist in developing new instruments, where needed. In cooperation with the governing bodies of the conventions, the Committee will exchange experience with the compliance and enforcement mechanisms required for the implementation of the international environmental legal instruments. The environmental performance reviews and the implementation of the recommendations of the Environmental Programme for Europe support these activities. The Committee will assess the need for integrated efforts to strengthen the environmental impact of legal instruments.

Work to be undertaken: As a first step, the secretariat will provide concise information on the common elements of the regional environmental conventions and protocols on implementation, compliance monitoring and enforcement procedures and experiences/plans regarding follow-up mechanisms. A workshop will be organized in early 1998, together with the governing bodies of the conventions, to exchange information and consider further work on these issues. The Committee on Environmental Policy will consider the results before the Ministerial Conference in Denmark.

Duration: continuous.

Annex IITENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF THE MEETINGS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1996	Place	Date
Task force on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters, with the Netherlands as lead country (fourth meeting)	Prague, Czech Republic	30 May-1 June
Ad Hoc Working Group on the convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making (first session)	Geneva	17-19 June
Core group, with the Netherlands as lead country, to draw up guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters (third meeting)	Nunspeet, Netherlands	6-7 September
Task force, with Greece as lead country, on legal and administrative aspects of the Water Convention	to be determined	autumn
Workshop on sustainable water-supply and management in cities	Istanbul, Turkey	October
Informal meeting on the Energy Conservation Strategy	Geneva	14-15 October
Consultation on points of contact for the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents	The Hague, Netherlands	21-22 October
Workshop on the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents	Warsaw, Poland	4-8 November
Ad Hoc Working Group on the convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making (second session)	Geneva	30 October - 1 November
Core group, with the Netherlands as lead country, to draw up guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary groundwaters (fourth meeting)	To be confirmed	December
Ad Hoc Working Group on the convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making (third session)	Geneva	11-13 December
Meeting of the task force, with Germany as lead country, to draw up a code of good agricultural practice	to be determined	1996 or 1997

1996	Place	Date
Meeting of the task force, with Romania as lead country, on water demand management	to be determined	1996 or 1997
Meeting of the task force, with Hungary as lead country, on good laboratory practice and laboratory accreditation	to be determined	1996 or 1997
1997		
Committee on Environmental Policy (special session)	Geneva	20-22 January
Ad hoc meeting to prepare the first meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention	Geneva	27-30 January
Ad Hoc Working Group on the convention on access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making (fourth session)	Geneva	17-19 February
Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics and related workshops (seventh session)	Geneva	17-21 February
Meeting of the Signatories to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (sixth meeting)	Geneva	10-14 March
Meeting of the Signatories to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (sixth meeting)	Geneva	16-18 April
Committee on Environmental Policy (fourth session) and the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe" (first session)	Geneva	26-30 May