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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

REPORT ON THE NINTH SESSION

Addendum

**PROGRAMME OF WORK
(2000-2003)**

SUBPROGRAMME 01 - ENVIRONMENT

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE REGIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The Regional (UNECE) Ministerial Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Geneva on 24 and 25 September 2001 adopted a Ministerial Statement that has important implications for the Committee on Environmental Policy. The Ministerial Statement calls for specific global and regional actions to be taken by member States. The Committee, jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Regional Office for Europe, was actively involved in the preparation of the regional assessment report and the development of the Ministerial Statement.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 24 August-4 September 2002), a side event entitled "Participatory democracy and good governance as fundamental tools for a human rights approach to sustainable development" was organized jointly by ECE, the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. It focused on strengthening environmental rights and their contribution to sustainable development in the context of good governance and respect for human rights.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 1

1.1 FUTURE ECE STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The 2002-2003 biennium constitutes a unique compelling moment for member States of the ECE to articulate and affirm their vision of its role and the scope of its activities in the environment sector. Due to major events in this biennium, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the "Environment for Europe" Kiev Ministerial Conference, and more than ten years of radical changes with profound effects on the environment, the Committee decided to make use of this crucial period for self-reflection by asking a number of questions related to ECE activities, on the environment in the past ten years, on trends and developments and how these affect the environment in the ECE region. On the basis of a draft paper, prepared by the secretariat, the Committee will identify challenges and emerging orientations of environmental policies in the region to become the main strategic document for the development of its long-term framework.

Work accomplished

The Committee, at its eighth session, requested the secretariat to prepare a comprehensive analytical paper based on policy documentation, the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the environmental performance reviews, the document on the "Future of the 'Environment for Europe' process" and work carried out under the ECE environmental conventions. The draft paper on "Challenges and emerging directions of ECE environmental policies" was discussed by the Bureau in July and September 2002 and by the Committee at its ninth session and amended accordingly.

Work to be undertaken

The paper on the Committee's strategic directions will be finalized in late spring 2003 on the basis of decisions taken by the Committee in February 2003, on the outcome of the Kiev Ministerial Conference and the future of the "Environment for Europe" process, together with the decision taken by the Commission on its role in the follow-up to the World Summit. The paper will be submitted for endorsement to the Bureau at its meeting in June-July 2003 after close consultations with the conventions' governing bodies prior to its presentation and final adoption at the Committee's tenth session (20-22 October 2003).

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The Committee on Environmental Policy included environmental performance reviews of selected ECE countries in its work programme starting in 1996. In 1997, at its fourth session, the Committee established the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance for a period of two years to (a) provide guidance to the ECE secretariat and the Committee on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the EPR programme, and (b) assist the secretariat in coordinating the programme with processes under way in other international institutions, and particularly in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Committee has twice extended the mandate of the Expert Group: in September 1999, at the Committee's sixth session and, in 2001, at its eighth session. The current term of the Expert Group continues to 2003.

Comprehensive environmental performance reviews have been undertaken in Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Yugoslavia. Similar reviews were also carried out, in cooperation with OECD, in Belarus, Bulgaria, Poland and the Russian Federation. Second reviews have been undertaken in Bulgaria and Estonia.

1.2 THE ECE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROGRAMME, INCLUDING WORKING METHODS AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Work accomplished:

A programme description was developed by the EPR Expert Group during its first mandate from 1997 to 1999. The programme makes it possible to carry out comprehensive as well as second environmental performance reviews, and to organize discussions of general problems and experiences facing national environmental administrations in transition. Continued methodological and organizational guidance will be provided by the EPR Expert Group.

In September 1999, at its sixth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy renewed the mandate of the Expert Group for an additional two years. During its second mandate, the Expert Group met four times: in Erevan, on 26 March 2000, and in Geneva, on 21-22 September 2000, 8-9 March 2001, and 19-21 September 2001. During this period, the Expert Group addressed what it had identified as the main unsolved problems, as well as other issues that became more salient over the two-year period. Among these issues were the optimization of the review process, from pre-mission to follow-up; the structure of the peer review; the closure of the first round of reviews; dissemination of information; cooperation; and the future of the Expert Group itself.

Upon the recommendation of the Expert Group and in consultation with the Bureau, the Committee, at its eighth session, revised the way in which it conducts the peer reviews. Under its new mandate, the Expert Group met on 7-11 October 2002 to discuss its work programme and to carry out an expert review of Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Yugoslavia. The peer reviews of these three countries took place at the ninth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy, in November 2002. The final EPR reports will be published in early 2003.

Work to be undertaken:

The environmental performance review of Georgia is scheduled to take place before the Committee's special session in February 2003. The Expert Group will meet on 17 February to carry out an expert review of Georgia.

The EPR Expert Group, taking into account the guidance by the Committee at its eighth session, will continue to offer advice and support to the preparations for, and conduct of, the EPRs. It will also carry out a detailed expert review of each EPR prior to the Committee's peer review and report on it to the Committee, and it will assist the secretariat in preparing a paper

that identifies significant policy issues for discussion within the Committee and interaction with the reviewed countries.

The future direction of the EPR programme will be under consideration at the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe." For this purpose, the secretariat has prepared a ten-year review of the EPR programme, entitled, "Environmental policies in transition: lessons learned from ten years of UNECE environmental performance reviews" with a set of recommendations. On the basis of the recommendations, the Committee will discuss and decide further on the future of the EPR programme at its tenth session.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 2

"ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE" PROCESS/ ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME FOR EUROPE

At the Aarhus Conference, the Environment Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to improving cooperation on environmental protection in the ECE region. They also recognized the political importance of the "Environment for Europe" process as the major long-term pan-European political framework for the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. In particular, the Committee on Environmental Policy on the basis of the Environmental Programme for Europe and taking into account the report "Europe's Environment: The Second Assessment", implemented priority actions on a pan-European level and will report on progress. The Committee, reviewing the themes and items to be put on the agenda, considered its substantive input for the fifth Ministerial Conference as follows:

(1) an analytical ten-year review of the environmental performance review programme (see 1.2); (2) environmental assessment and reporting; (3) guidelines for strengthening compliance with implementation of multilateral environmental agreements; (4) energy and the environment (see 3.3); and (5) environmental education for sustainable development.

2.1 PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The Committee participates in the substantive and practical preparation of the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" to be held in Kiev (Ukraine) in May 2003. A special session of the Committee will be held in February 2003 to finalize and adopt the Committee's input to the Kiev Ministerial Conference.

Work accomplished:

The Committee contributed substantively to the above-mentioned items as proposed for inclusion on the agenda of the Conference. The Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe" established by the Committee at its sixth session held its third session from 3 to 4 July 2002 and its fourth session from 7 to 8 November 2002.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee will discuss and endorse its substantive contribution to be submitted through the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe" to the Conference. A joint meeting of the Committee and the Working Group will be held on

19 February to discuss issues of common interest. It will be followed by a meeting of the Working Group on 20 and 21 February 2003, in Geneva. A meeting of the Working Group is also foreseen on 17 to 19 May 2003, in Kiev. The Executive Committee of the Working Group will meet from 10 to 11 January 2003 in Kiev, on 10 February in Geneva and from 10 to 11 April (venue to be determined). The Kiev Conference is scheduled for 21 to 23 May 2003.

2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The Ministers at Aarhus recognized that mechanisms for coordinated monitoring, data collection, processing and management in the European region were still inadequate. They agreed to give high priority to improving these mechanisms as well as the state of environmental information to support decision-making and to improve the availability of reliable environmental information to the public.

Work accomplished:

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring contributed to the preparation of the Kiev Assessment report and it undertook activities on monitoring hazardous substances, monitoring inland waters, environmental indicators, waste data and classifications, information technologies and remote sensing.

Work to be undertaken:

The Working Group will continue to promote the coordination of efforts in the area of environmental monitoring, and in particular towards preparations for the Kiev Conference "Environment for Europe" in accordance with its work plan. It will in particular:

- (a) Finalize its contribution to the development of the third pan-European assessment report, appraise the difficulties encountered and make recommendations on how to improve the situation;
- (b) Undertake an in-depth analysis of a significant area of environmental monitoring, identify good practices to overcome the most pervasive obstacles and develop recommendations;
- (c) Identify areas where harmonization is needed and develop recommendations on priority actions;
- (d) Consider proposals on the role of remotely sensed environmental information and make recommendations, as appropriate.

2.3 COMPLIANCE

At its seventh session the Committee decided, upon a proposal put forward by the Netherlands, on the development of guidelines on environmental compliance and enforcement to be ready for adoption at the next Ministerial Conference in Kiev. The Committee mandated an open-ended Task Force led by the Netherlands and with the assistance of the secretariat to start work on the development of such guidelines.

Work accomplished:

The Task Force held five meetings between June 2001 and October 2002. In developing

the draft guidelines, the Task Force took into consideration the work done on the Guidelines on compliance and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP at its seventh special session in February 2002 (SS.VII/4). The Task Force considered, in particular, the purpose and scope of the guidelines with particular focus on the ways in which they could add maximum value for the region. In the draft guidelines, developed by the Task Force, enforcement aspects were considered as part of the national implementation process. It was therefore, concluded that the title "Guidelines on strengthening compliance with and implementation of MEAs in the ECE region" was more appropriate and better reflected the scope and the content of the document. Concluding its task, the Task Force proposed a number of actions which the Committee might consider in the future to promote better implementation and compliance with MEAs.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee will review, endorse and submit through the Working Group of Senior Officials the draft guidelines on strengthening compliance with and implementation of MEAs in the ECE region, for adoption at the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Kiev, in May 2003. The Committee may consider to take some follow-up action, in accordance with decisions taken in Kiev.

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

During the preparations of the Kiev Conference, member countries and non-governmental organizations have shown an interest in improving environmental education and education for sustainable development. Education is a fundamental tool for changing patterns of consumption and production, for providing the foundation for research and development in technologies that may improve the environment and for integrating environment issues into people's thinking.

Work accomplished

The delegations of Sweden and the Russian Federation prepared draft elements for a UNECE strategy for environmental education for sustainable development. All interested parties were invited to participate in the Drafting Group, which met twice in the autumn of 2002 to further elaborate the document.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee will endorse the paper with basic elements for the strategy to be submitted through the Working Group of Senior Officials to the Ministerial Conference.

2.5 FOLLOW-UP TO THE STRATEGY TO PHASE OUT LEADED PETROL

The Aarhus Conference endorsed the Strategy to Phase Out Leaded Petrol for general use by road vehicles as early as possible and no later than 1 January 2005. The Ministers committed themselves to working towards the intermediate targets of the Strategy and to evaluating their fulfilment at the next conference in Kiev in 2003. The Committee will promote the implementation of the Strategy.

Work accomplished:

The Committee was provided with a status report on the phasing-out of lead in petrol based on, among other things, answers to the biennial questionnaire of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

Work to be undertaken:

The executive summary of the analysis of the responses to the biennial questionnaire will be presented to the Committee at its tenth session.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 3

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SECTORAL POLICIES

One of the topics of recent debate on environmental policy and within the Committee on Environmental Policy has been that environmental concerns should be integrated in the activities of sectors in society with relevance to the environment. Integrating environmental policies into sectoral policies and strategies is a precondition for the effective implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable development principles. From an environmental point of view, efficient integration would lead to a more effective implementation of environmental policies. The scope, direction and product of its work are still to be discussed by the Committee; however, a number of integration processes are under way through negotiation and implementation of legal instruments. For example, the negotiation of a protocol on strategic environmental assessment to the ECE Espoo Convention will further underline the Convention's cross-sectoral approach by integrating environmental and health considerations into strategic decision-making. Another example is the ECE/World Health Organization (WHO) Protocol on Water and Health and other mechanisms of cross-sectoral integration in which the Committee is directly involved, such as transport, environment and health, environment and health, energy and environment, and agriculture and environment.

3.1 TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Work accomplished:

On 5 July 2002 the Second High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health was convened by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe to follow up to the decisions taken by the First High-level Meeting (Geneva, 4 May 2001) on the steps to be taken for moving towards transport sustainable for health and the environment in the region. The preparatory work was undertaken by the Joint UNECE-WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health. The main outcome was the establishment of a Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), which focuses on a few key priority areas drawn from the ECE Programme of Joint Action and the WHO Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, and where international action was estimated to have the most impact. They are: integration of environment and health into decision-making on transport, demand-side management and modal split, and urban transport. As requested by the Meeting, THE PEP was also transmitted to the secretariat of the World Summit on Sustainable

Development to be considered as part of the list of partnerships for the regional implementation of Agenda 21.

The Meeting also established a new intergovernmental body, the UNECE/WHO Steering Committee, to be responsible for the programme's implementation. The Steering Committee will cooperate closely with the Committee on Environmental Policy, the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Human Settlements.

Work to be undertaken:

The first session of the Steering Committee is scheduled to be held on 10-11 April 2003, to discuss and decide upon the detailed work plan and the implementation of THE PEP. The programme elements will include actions that contribute to the implementation of the above-mentioned priority areas of THE PEP.

The Committee is expected to encourage active and coordinated efforts of the transport, environment and health sectors for the implementation of THE PEP. The secretariat will keep the Committee informed about the progress.

3.2 ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) was established as a result of the 1994 Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Helsinki.

The third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health took place in London from 16 to 18 June 1999. This Conference aimed to set an agenda for environment and health in Europe for the start of the 21st century and to agree on concrete commitments to specific actions to implement the National Environment and Health Action Plans (NEHAPs). EEHC has supervised and supported the drafting of NEHAPs. EEHC, which was also the Steering Committee for the preparation of the London Conference, prepared the substantive proposals for the Conference. One major item was the adoption of the Protocol on Water and Health to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The London Conference also produced the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health and a ministerial declaration.

Work accomplished:

The European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) met in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2001 and in Sofia in 2002. In addition, an intergovernmental meeting was held in Italy in 2002 to discuss possible priority issues to be put on the agenda for the WHO Health and Environment Ministerial Conference (Budapest, 2004). "The future of our children" was selected as the overall theme of the Budapest Conference.

Close contacts were established between EEHC and the Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe".

Work to be undertaken:

The next EEHC Meeting will be held in Budapest in November 2002 and in Copenhagen in April 2003. An intergovernmental meeting is scheduled to take place in June 2003 in Sweden to discuss items to be included in the agenda of the next Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Health.

EEHC will continue to support the "Environment for Europe" process by contributing to developing significant strategies and cooperative arrangements leading to harmonization in the region through the Working Group of Senior Officials. It will also continue cooperation with the "environment and health" process, as called for in the Aarhus Ministerial Declaration, so as to develop and implement measures to better protect human health and the environment. The Committee on Environmental Policy will continue to contribute to the European Environment and Health Committee through its newly elected representatives from the following countries: Czech Republic, Italy, Republic of Moldova and Sweden.

3.3 ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

At the Aarhus Conference, the Ministers acknowledged the complex, cross-sectoral nature of energy-efficiency policies and the need for integrating those policies into other sectors, for instance housing, transport and industry. The Ministers agreed to promote action to strengthen international cooperation on monitoring the implementation of energy-efficiency policies.

Work accomplished:

The ECE/OECD Workshop on Enhancing the Environment by Reforming Energy Prices, held in Průhonice near Prague (Czech Republic) from 14 to 16 June 2000, prepared recommendations to ECE Governments. The Chairman of the Working Group on the Implementation of the Energy Charter Treaty Protocol on Energy Efficiency and Related Environmental Aspects (PEEREA) reported to the Committee on progress made in its implementation.

Work to be undertaken:

The Committee on Environmental Policy, in cooperation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy and other relevant international bodies (such as the Energy Charter Treaty Secretariat, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), will monitor the implementation of the energy-related decisions taken at the Aarhus Conference. In particular, it will:

- (a) Continue, through the task force on energy and the environment established jointly with the Committee on Sustainable Energy and on the basis of the Průhonice Workshop's results, its activities on adjusting energy prices in countries in transition, reforming energy subsidies and internalizing external costs, including taxation, in all ECE countries. These activities will lead to the development of non-legally binding guidelines for decision makers, the first two parts of which will be submitted to the Committee in February 2003 as a contribution to the Kiev Conference. The last part will be prepared at a later stage;
- (b) Consider, at its annual sessions, PEEREA progress reports.

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 4

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Since the 1970s five regional environmental conventions have been negotiated and adopted within the framework of ECE: (i) the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; (ii) the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; (iii) the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; (iv) the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents; and (v) the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. All five conventions have entered into force and their governing bodies carry responsibility for further work. Furthermore, eight protocols to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and a Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention have been adopted. The Committee will be informed about the progress in the work under the conventions and protocols, as appropriate.

4.1 FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT TO THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS

With a view to improving environmental quality in the ECE region, and relying in part on the programme of environmental performance reviews, the Committee will consider and, as appropriate, take measures to make the implementation of the regional environmental conventions and protocols more effective. The Committee will offer a catalysing forum in which all government representatives, including the governing bodies of regional conventions, can share their experience in promoting and assessing the implementation of regional environmental instruments, and then identify means of improving compliance with them. If needed, the Committee will negotiate new legal instruments.

Work accomplished:

At the invitation of the Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Policy, an informal meeting was organized with the Bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and of the ECE environmental conventions in July 2002. The aim was to support the regional environmental conventions, and to share experience and investigate possible synergies and areas of cooperation among instruments and to discuss specific items which are of common interest. Participants discussed the issue of compliance on the basis of the draft guidelines. They also discussed the provisions and activities of the ECE environmental conventions relevant to the themes of the Aarhus Convention, as well as the implications of the recent entry into force of that Convention for the fields covered by the other conventions on the basis of a preliminary draft in-depth legal analysis. Finally, on the basis of a draft analysis of good practices and potential problems in public participation in international forums, participants discussed their experience.

Work to be undertaken:

Further work on the possible development of guidelines on public participation in international forums may be undertaken in the near future within the framework of the Aarhus Convention, with the possibility for all interested stakeholders, including representatives of the

Bureaux of the other ECE environmental conventions and individual States and organizations to participate, and with due account given to other relevant studies undertaken in this area. The Committee will continue to facilitate discussions and the exchange of information to promote the implementation of the conventions. The governing bodies should also be involved in the discussion on future environmental priorities. To that end the Committee will convene a meeting of its Bureau and those of the environmental conventions in early summer 2003.

4.2 CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted and signed in 1998 and entered into force in October 2001. The first meeting of the Parties took place in October 2002, by which time there were 22 Parties. The Meeting adopted Guidelines on access to information, public participation and access to justice with respect to genetically modified organisms and established a compliance mechanism mandated to deal with communications from the public concerning non-compliance. Task forces on access to justice and electronic information tools were also established, and the main procedural and institutional arrangements for the Convention, including financial arrangements, a work programme, an intersessional body and rules of procedure, were put in place. A protocol on pollutant release and transfer registers is being prepared with a view to it being adopted and signed at the Kiev Ministerial Conference (May 2003). A capacity-building service has been established jointly by UNECE and UNEP to support the implementation of the Convention, in particular in countries in transition. The Meeting of the Parties will consider the possibility of developing guidelines on public participation in international forums and will invite the other conventions' governing bodies and the Committee to participate in this work. The secretariat will keep the Committee abreast of the main activities under the Convention.

4.3 CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was signed in 1979 and entered into force in March 1983. The Parties to the Convention and its protocols will work as agreed in their work-plan for the implementation of the Convention. Emphasis of work continues to be on the implementation of those protocols already in force, and preparation for the review of the three protocols that have not yet entered into force. The review process will use revised models and updated scientific data. It will give increased attention to human health effects, fine particulates and the dynamics of environmental damage and recovery. The twentieth session of the Executive Body for the Convention will take place from 10 to 13 December 2002. The secretariat will inform the Committee of the activities under the Convention.

4.4 CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes was signed in 1992 and entered into force in October 1996. The Parties to the Convention will work as agreed in their 2000-2003 work plan for the implementation of the

Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health. The third meeting of the Parties to the Convention will take place in Spain on 26-28 November 2003, when a new work plan covering the period 2003-2006 will be adopted. The second meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol is scheduled to take place in June 2003. The secretariat will inform the Committee of the activities under the Convention and its Protocol. A protocol on civil liability is being prepared (see 4.6).

4.5 CONVENTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN A TRANSBOUNDARY CONTEXT

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context was signed in 1991 and entered into force in October 1997. The Convention has at present 40 Parties. They will work as agreed in their work plan for the implementation of the Convention. At the second meeting of the Parties to the Convention, held in February 2001 in Sofia (Bulgaria), an Implementation Committee was set up. The third meeting of the Parties is expected to take place in Croatia in May 2004. One of the major activities under the Convention is the preparation of a protocol on strategic environmental assessment, which is expected to be signed at the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in May 2003 in Kiev. The secretariat will inform the Committee of the activities under the Convention.

4.6 CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was signed in 1992 and entered into force on 19 April 2000. The Convention aims to strengthen international cooperation on the prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents in order to improve overall industrial safety in the ECE region. At present 25 countries and the European Community have ratified or acceded to the Convention. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Convention's governing body, was held in Chisinau on 6-8 November 2002. The Conference of the Parties discussed the first report on the Convention's implementation. Its further enhancement and assistance to some countries with economies in transition are among the priorities for further work under the Convention. An intergovernmental negotiation process aimed at drawing up a legally binding instrument on civil liability for transboundary damage caused by hazardous activities is well under way within the framework of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions as decided by their governing bodies. This process is expected to be finalized before the Kiev Ministerial Conference (see 4.4) and presented at the Ministerial Conference for adoption and signature.