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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

(Sixth session, 20-24 September 1998)
(Item 9 (e) of the provisional agenda)

**DRAFT MANDATE OF THE AD HOC PREPARATORY WORKING GROUP
OF SENIOR OFFICIALS "ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE"**

1. Pursuant to the Declaration by the Ministers of the Environment of the ECE region at Århus (Denmark) on 25 June 1998, the "Environment for Europe" process remains essential as a political framework for cooperation in environmental protection in Europe. The Ministers at Århus stressed that the process should build on the work done so far and, in particular, move from policy commitments to practical implementation. They reiterated the need for an efficient and cost-effective structure for the "Environment for Europe" process. The Ministers also acknowledged the important role of ECE in overseeing the process in close cooperation with relevant agencies and organizations.
2. For the preparation of the next Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Ukraine in September 2002, and as agreed at Århus, the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy has established the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe", under the chairmanship of the host country, and an executive committee, which will constitute the Bureau of this Working Group.
3. The Executive Committee will be composed of two senior officials from central and eastern Europe, two from newly independent States and four from western Europe. The Chairpersons of the UN/ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe, the Project Preparation Committee (PPC), and the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy will also be invited. It shall also be chaired by the host country.

4. The Working Group will have its first meeting in 2000 in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Environmental Policy. Thereafter, the Working Group will meet as often as necessary and keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress.

5. The Working Group is responsible for the substantive preparations for the 2002 Ministerial Conference and, in the run-up to the Conference, will serve as the central coordinating body for the further development of the "Environment for Europe" process. The Working Group will consider work undertaken to implement the recommendations and the decisions of the Århus Conference. At the first session of the Working Group, the Executive Committee will present its proposals for the work of the Working Group, including time-schedules.

6. Considering the large amount of substantive work to be done, the Working Group will work in close cooperation with the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP) for Central and Eastern Europe, the Project Preparation Committee (PPC), the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and the European Environment Agency. The Working Group will also cooperate with the Council of Europe, the Commission of the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), and other international organizations and institutions, international non-governmental and private sector organizations which will be involved in the preparation of the 2002 Ministerial Conference.

7. The Working Group will submit the documents prepared under its auspices or in cooperation with other international organizations and institutions, including the draft ministerial declaration, to the 2002 Ministerial Conference in Ukraine for consideration and possible adoption. The Working Group will keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of the preparation of the documents for the Conference.

8. The Working Group may set up expert groups to elaborate specific issues, when necessary.

9. The ECE secretariat will provide the necessary secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in accordance with ECE rules and practices.
