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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials  
"Environment for Europe"  
(First session, Geneva, 29 September 2000)  
(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
"ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE"**

**Terms of reference**

**Background of the Working Group of Senior Officials**

1. The First Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" was held in 1991 at Dobris Castle in the then Czechoslovakia, and the Second Ministerial Conference was convened in Lucerne (Switzerland) from 28 to 30 April 1993.
2. It was on the recommendation of the Ministers at the Second Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" that the first Working Group of Senior Governmental Officials "Environment for Europe" was established by the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems<sup>1</sup> at its special session on 21 October 1993. This Working Group was, among other things, to oversee the follow-up to the Lucerne Conference and to serve

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<sup>1</sup> In 1994, by decision of the Economic Commission for Europe (E/1994/37 – E/ECE/1304, decision F (49), the body called the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems was renamed the Committee on Environmental Policy and given new terms of reference.

as the central coordinating body for the further development of the "Environment for Europe" process, with particular reference to preparations for the Third Conference, which took place in Sofia (Bulgaria), from 23 to 25 October 1995. The Senior Advisers also requested the Executive Secretary of ECE to provide support to the Working Group in terms of secretariat and conference facilities in accordance with the rules and practices of ECE.

3. Following the Sofia Conference, it was again decided to use a Working Group of Senior Officials to prepare the next Ministerial Conference. For this reason, the Committee on Environmental Policy, at its special session on 17 January 1996, established the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials "Environment for Europe" as the central coordinating body for preparations for the Fourth Ministerial Conference to be held in Denmark in 1998. An Executive Committee was set up as well to prepare the work of the Working Group. The Committee also approved the mandate for the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials, and it requested the ECE secretariat to provide the necessary secretariat assistance and conference facilities to the Working Group in accordance with ECE rules and practices.

4. Subsequent to the Aarhus Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", the Committee, at its sixth session, 20-24 September 1999, established the Ad Hoc Preparatory Working Group of Senior Officials to prepare for the Fifth Ministerial Conference in 2002. The Committee adopted a new mandate for the Working Group specific to preparations for the Kiev Conference (see annex) and again decided that the ECE secretariat would provide the necessary secretariat assistance and conference facilities, in accordance with ECE rules and practices.

#### Composition of the Working Group and its Executive Committee

5. The Working Group of Senior Officials is open to participation of all member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Working Group will, in addition, establish an Executive Committee, comprised of: two senior officials from central and eastern Europe; two from newly independent States; and four from western Europe. Also invited as observers will be the Chairs of:

- (a) The UN/ECE Committee on Environmental Policy;
- (b) The Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe;
- (c) The Project Preparation Committee ; and
- (d) The Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

The Executive Committee will be chaired by Ukraine, as host country.

### Meetings of the Working Group and its Executive Committee

6. It was decided by the Committee at its sixth session that the Working Group would hold its first meeting in 2000 in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee. The date has been set as 29 September 2000. Thereafter, the Working Group will meet as often as necessary and keep the Committee on Environmental Policy informed of its progress. Proposals for the work of the Working Group, including time-schedules, are to be presented at its first session. (See document CEP/AC.11/2000/5 and 6.)

### Partners

7. As has been the practice for previous Conference preparations, the Committee at its sixth session decided that the Working Group would work in close cooperation with:

- (a) The Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe;
- (b) The Project Preparation Committee;
- (c) The Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; and
- (d) The European Environment Agency.

8. The Working Group will also cooperate with:

- (a) The Commission of the European Communities;
- (b) The Council of Europe;
- (c) The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;
- (d) The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development;
- (e) The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
- (f) The United Nations Environment Programme;
- (g) The World Bank;
- (h) The World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe, and
- (i) Other international organizations and institutions, including governing bodies of environmental conventions and the regional environmental centres, international non-governmental and private-sector organizations.

9. In the preparations for the Aarhus Conference, reports were contributed by the Working Group itself as well as by the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, the European Union/European Environment Agency, the Organization for Economic Cooperation for Development (EAP Task Force), and the Council of Europe, in addition to United Nations Economic Commission for Europe acting as secretariat both to the preparations for the Conference and to international conventions.

10. It is the role of the ECE secretariat to provide the secretariat services and to oversee the entire process. ECE will, therefore, assist the Working Group in its coordination functions.

#### Budget

11. In providing secretariat support, including conference servicing, ECE and the United Nations Organization in Geneva (UNOG) will provide more than US\$ 1 million for the preparations for the Kiev Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". Additional funds, significantly for travel by experts from countries in transition and the secretariat and for consultancies, will need to be provided. It is suggested that funds should be deposited into the United Nations Trust Fund "Environment for Europe". Donors are invited to make pledges as soon as possible to facilitate a smooth preparatory process.

#### Agenda

12. The Working Group, supported by its Executive Committee, will set the agenda for the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". Topics may be derived from decisions taken at the Fourth Ministerial Conference, suggestions from member States and partners in the preparatory process, and other major events, such as the ten-year review (2002) of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio Conference) and the United Nations Millennium Conference (2001). Document CEP/AC.11/2000/4 summarizes some of the possible topics suggested to date. Particular emphasis should be given to items of great political importance to the region.

**Annex**

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

(Adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy  
at its sixth session, 20-24 September 1999)

1. Pursuant to the Declaration by the Ministers of the Environment of the ECE region at Aarhus (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 Aarhus 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 Aarhus, 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.
3. The Executive Committee, which will be established by the Working Group of Senior Officials at its first session, 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. The Executive Committee will also be chaired by the host country.
4. The Working Group will hold 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 Aarhus Conference. Proposals for the work of the Working Group, including time-schedules, will be presented at its first session.
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.