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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR EASTERN EUROPE,
CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA (REVISED VERSION)¹**

Note by the secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-seventh session, the Working Group on Strategies and Review agreed on an Action Plan to Involve Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) Countries in the Work of the Convention (EB.AIR/WG.5/80, annex) and invited the Executive Body to consider

¹ This document was revised by the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its thirty-eighth session with a request for submission to the twenty-fourth session of the Executive Body.

the plan's implementation. The Executive Body, at its twenty-third session in December 2005, decided to implement the Action Plan proposed by the Working Group and invited it to report on the Plan's implementation to its twenty-fourth session.

2. This note presents progress on each item of the agreed Action Plan as discussed and amended at the thirty-eighth session of the Working Group.

I. STATUS OF ACCESSION TO THE CONVENTION AND ITS PROTOCOLS BY THE EECCA COUNTRIES.

3. Nine of the 12 EECCA countries are Parties to the Convention: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Of these, three are Parties to the EMEP Protocol,² the Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions and the Protocol Concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or Their Transboundary Fluxes (Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine). The Republic of Moldova is Party to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the Protocol on Heavy Metals. Some countries (Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine) are Signatories to protocols but have not ratified them.

4. Three countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) are not Parties to the Convention but have been involved in subregional UNECE initiatives and have indicated at workshops held in the subregion that they are interested in acceding to the Convention and its Protocols.

II. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

Item 1. Create awareness on potential health and environment problems in EECCA, as well as on the nature of transboundary influences and links with other environmental problems, by compiling national and international expert reports (contributions should be invited from CCE, WHO, UNECE, UNEP, EEA, non-government organizations and national experts).

5. One of the key objectives and areas for action identified in the EECCA Environment Strategy adopted by Ministers at the fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Kiev in 2003 was to reduce the risks to human health through pollution prevention and control. The Strategy identifies the problems and planned actions related to the reduction of urban air

² Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe.

pollution. The implementation of this Strategy will be reviewed at the sixth “Environment for Europe” Conference in Belgrade in October 2007.

6. The World Health Organization (WHO) is the “facilitating institution” in designing actions addressing urban air pollution in the EECCA Environment Strategy. To discuss current and future strategies for preventing the health impacts of air pollution in EECCA countries, WHO held a workshop in Moscow on 30–31 May 2005 that brought together representatives of the national health and environmental authorities in 11 countries of EECCA, as well as outside experts.³ Participants agreed on the key elements for future strategies, in particular on the pollutants on which future actions should focus, as well as on the main components for air quality assessment and abatement strategies. Among the follow-up actions, the formulation of a framework plan for the development of monitoring of particulate matter in the EECCA countries was selected as a priority. The framework plan is being prepared by WHO for publication and distribution.

7. The WHO *Air Quality Guidelines for Europe* were translated and published in Russian in 2005.

8. Accession to the Convention can be seen as a first step towards dealing with problems of air pollution, including transboundary air pollution. (Reducing and preventing air pollution, including long-range transboundary air pollution, is a fundamental principle of the Convention (article 2).) All EECCA countries except Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are Parties to the Convention. Accession to the EMEP Protocol can be seen as a step towards a commitment to participate in the scientific and technical work under the Convention. At present only Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are Parties to the Protocol.

Item 2. Assure political commitment at the ministerial level by agreement on priority air pollution problems, the need for international cooperation, the steps to be taken and whom to involve (action required from the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the Executive Body). Priority could be given to the larger countries (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan) or other countries with a particular willingness to become involved.

9. The Belgrade Conference presents an opportunity for raising the profile of the Convention and ensuring political commitment among the EECCA countries. Strengthening the implementation of regional conventions and protocols and encouraging efforts to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and coherence are major goals of the “Environment for Europe” process

³ The report of the WHO workshop is available at http://www.euro.who.int/Document/AIQ/health_basis_AQ.pdf.

agreed upon by Ministers at the fifth Conference in Kiev. The focus in Belgrade will be on implementation and delivery. Three major components within this context have been identified: (a) assessment of the effectiveness of agreed commitments and tools, including the UNECE conventions; (b) analysis of problems in the implementation of existing commitments and their root causes; and (c) presentation of success stories and good practices to be built on for further progress in capacity-building and in the implementation of existing commitments.

10. At an informal meeting, held in June 2006, the Bureaux of the five UNECE Conventions and the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy discussed how progress achieved and further strengthening of the implementation of the various instruments might be addressed at the Belgrade Conference and made recommendations for an analytical paper on this issue to be prepared by the secretariat. The document will consider cross-cutting issues, especially those related to implementation, compliance and capacity-building. It will focus not only on the obligations arising from the Conventions but also on the incentives they provide for capacity-building and sharing of good practice, in particular in EECCA and South-Eastern Europe (SEE).

Item 3. Invite the nomination of experts/focal points to task forces and expert groups and further encourage funding by lead countries to enable experts to attend meetings (action: chairpersons of task forces, secretariat).

11. The secretariat sent a letter to the chairs of task forces and expert groups and heads of delegation of lead Parties, asking them to provide information on participation and on the availability of support for experts to attend meetings and workshops, and inviting them to consider how they might address current shortfalls in participation and support and plans to improve the existing situation. The information was requested by 30 March 2006. The secretariat received six replies, which differed considerably in their level of detail. The information can be summarized as follows:

12. The Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling is led by the Netherlands, which is also hosting the Coordinating Centre for Effects. For all meetings of these entities, the Netherlands provides a daily allowance for EECCA representatives but does not reimburse travel costs.

13. In the case of the Expert Group on Ammonia, the lead country (the United Kingdom) requests the host country to provide financial support for participants from EECCA countries. Of the 33 delegates attending the Expert Group's most recent meeting (in the Czech Republic), two were from the Russian Federation. It should be noted, however, that the eighth meeting of the Expert Group, as well as the expert panel on agriculture and nature of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections, will be held in Saint Petersburg in October 2007.

14. Germany provides full support (travel, accommodation and per diem) for the participation of EECCA experts in the meetings of the task forces and expert groups it leads. Thus, in 2005 it enabled the participation of four experts (three from the Russian Federation and one from Ukraine) in the first meeting of the Task Force on Heavy Metals and that of two experts (Russian Federation) in its second meeting. Two experts (Russian Federation) participated in the meeting of the Task Force on Heavy Metals in 2006. Three experts (Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine) participated in the meetings of the ICP Mapping and Modelling Task Force and the workshops of the Coordinating Centre for Effects (CCE), and one expert (Russian Federation) participated in meetings of the Expert Group on Particulate Matter in both 2005 and 2006.

15. Two experts (Belarus and Georgia) attended the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling, led by the United Kingdom, in 2006.

16. Participation by experts and representatives from EECCA in the work of the Task Force on Health is facilitated by support from Germany, which covers travel costs. Four representatives from EECCA countries participated in the meeting of the Task Force in 2005: one from Georgia, one from the Russian Federation and two from Ukraine. It was noted, however, that the involvement of EECCA representatives could be improved.

17. Finland, Norway and the European Environment Agency (EEA) provided support for the participation of 16 experts from the EECCA countries and SEE in the meeting of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections in October 2005. A Capacity-Building Workshop on Air Emission Inventories targeting these countries was held back to back with the meeting. Norway, as a lead country of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections, also intended to provide funding to ensure the participation of EECCA experts in its meetings in 2006.

18. Representatives of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine participate in the annual meetings of the ICP Forests Task Force. Their travel costs are reimbursed by the Programme Centre of ICP Forests, which is hosted by Germany, using funds provided under a grant agreement with the European Commission.

19. The lead countries of the Task Force on POPs can also provide funds to facilitate the participation of EECCA experts in the Task Force meetings. The Netherlands covers the daily subsistence allowances but cannot fund travel fares. Canada provides financial support on a case-by-case basis upon request.

20. The Working Group invited the secretariat to send a follow-up letter to the chairs of task forces and expert groups requesting them to provide updated information in time for the twenty-fourth session of the Executive Body.

Item 4. Draw up a provisional budget for action (secretariat), taking into account ongoing work (e.g. UNECE CAPACT project), and discuss funding with possible donors such as the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Commission and Parties (action: Executive Body, secretariat).

21. At its twenty-third session, the Executive Body approved a list of activities and proposed a budget for the trust fund established to support activities for countries with economies in transition of US\$ 313,180 for 2006 and provisional budgets of US\$ 250,000 for 2007 and 2008 (ECE/EB.AIR/87, para. 99).

22. As of September 2006, the contributions received in the trust fund (Project E112) amounted to US\$ 192,864. A detailed report on the trust fund is presented in document ECE/EB.AIR/2006/2.

Item 5. Invite Parties that have not already done so to ratify the EMEP Protocol as a first step for achieving major benefits from cooperation with the Convention's programme centres and other Parties. This step would lead to support for setting up monitoring stations and for reporting national emission inventories (see below).

23. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova are not Parties to the EMEP Protocol. All of these countries were represented at the UNECE/CAPACT⁴ Workshop on Air Quality Management and the Legal Framework, held on 12–14 October 2005 in Almaty, where participants agreed to carry out preparatory work to facilitate adherence to the Convention and its relevant protocols, starting with the EMEP, POPs and Heavy Metals protocols and the [Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone](#) (the Gothenburg Protocol).

24. At the thirty-eighth session of the Working Group, the delegations of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova expressed their countries' intention to ratify the EMEP Protocol.

⁴ Capacity-Building for Air Quality Management and the Application of Clean Coal Combustion Technologies in Central Asia.

Item 6. Consider available EMEP monitoring stations, identify further requirements and priorities, and develop plans for improving the EMEP network by establishing at least one EMEP station in each country (action: EMEP Chemical Coordinating Centre, Task Force on Measurements and Modelling and Parties).

25. Currently, there are four EMEP stations in the Russian Federation, two in Ukraine, one in Belarus and one in the Republic of Moldova. Under the CAPACT project, one ambient air monitoring station in Kazakhstan will be upgraded to become an EMEP station. The Chemical Coordinating Centre (CCC) has communicated its efforts to support the establishment of EMEP sites in Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. Ukraine is working on a project to establish another EMEP site in the Danube delta as an in-kind contribution to cover its arrears to EMEP for the period 1996–2001 equivalent to US\$ 175,205.

26. It should be noted that the *EMEP Manual for Sampling and Chemical Analysis* has now been translated into Russian.

27. Account should be taken of and synergies sought with the work of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, which reports to the Committee on Environmental Policy, to assess existing environmental monitoring networks in EECCA and advise on priority needs for expanding, optimizing and upgrading these networks, taking into account international requirements, guidelines and experiences.

28. Training for 12 monitoring experts from the EECCA countries took place in Poland in September 2006 in conjunction with the Workshop on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting by Enterprises organized by the UNECE Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment on 4–6 September 2006 in Warsaw, in accordance with item 1.8 (d) of the workplan for the implementation of the Convention. Another workshop with the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring was planned for October 2006 in Donetsk (Ukraine).

Item 7. Develop best emission estimates and scenarios (for SO₂, NO_x, NH₃, NMVOC, CO, Hg, Cd, Pb, PAHs, dioxins/furans and hexachlorobenzene as a minimum) based on energy statistics, agricultural data, etc., and organize bilateral consultations with EECCA experts (available expert estimates may be used as a starting point) (action: CIAM, MSC-West).

29. Bilateral consultations were held between the Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling (CIAM) and representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Belarus in 2006 to discuss data available for integrated assessment modelling.

30. The Capacity Building Workshop on Air Emission Inventories for experts from countries with economies in transition, which was held back to back with the annual meeting of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) in 2005, made a number of recommendations. As a follow-up to the workshop, Norway started efforts to ensure support for an EECCA country to host a website with emission inventory methodology information in Russian.

31. It should also be noted that the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections receives methodological support from Belarus's voluntary in-kind contribution to EMEP. This support has been very useful for improving the methodological basis for emission inventories in EECCA countries. It is expected that the inventory expertise of Belarus will continue to be used in the inventory improvement programme, including for inventory reviews, development of the *EMEP/CORINAIR Emission Inventory Guidebook* and methodological assistance to other countries in the region.

32. The main difficulties for EECCA countries relating to the preparation of emission inventories are methodological – for example, discrepancies between their national statistical categories and the SNAP codes. Regarding plans for translation of the *Guidebook*, priority chapters for translation have been identified, such as the chapters on large combustion plants and transport.

33. A workshop on monitoring, emission data and reporting under the CAPACT project will be held on 17–19 October 2006 in Almaty, followed by a TACIS-funded training seminar on emission inventories on 20 October 2006. Participation of experts from all EECCA countries will be ensured.

34. The Czech Republic will support the Republic in Moldova in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Gothenburg Protocol in its national legislation, as well as to further improve its emission inventory and its capacity to contribute to integrated assessment modelling. The assistance provided will be approximately US\$ 55,000.

Item 8. Extend the modelling domain of EMEP to include Central Asia and compare results with available measurement data (action: MSC-W).

35. MSC-W has been carrying out work to extend the EMEP model. This is further stimulated by the interest in hemispheric transport modelling, which is being received by the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution.

36. According to article 1, paragraph 4 of the EMEP Protocol, the “Geographical scope of EMEP” means “the area within which, coordinated by the international centres of EMEP, monitoring is carried out”. Therefore, the establishment of monitoring sites and the reporting of data to EMEP are steps towards extending the modelling domain.

Item 9. Participate in ecosystem monitoring networks (using new, existing or previously existing national networks) (action: EECCA countries).

37. The participation of a country in the effects-oriented work under the Working Group on Effects is recorded by attendance at Task Force meetings and/or the submission of monitoring data. The International Cooperative Programmes (ICPs) and the Task Force on Health have a record of participation via one or the other mode in the past few years from the following countries: Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Details are available at <http://www-dev.unece.org/env/wge/participation.htm>.

38. The Working Group urged delegations from EECCA countries to nominate relevant experts to participate in the effects-oriented activities. It invited the secretariat to send a letter to the Heads of Delegation requesting the nomination of focal points for task forces and expert groups where these are missing.

Item 10. Develop and harmonize receptor and ecosystem sensitivity maps and organize bilateral and subregional consultations (action: CCE and Working Group on Effects).

39. The Coordination Centre for Effects (CCE) of ICP Modelling and Mapping has prepared critical load maps using its background database, which is made available for evaluation and improvements. CCE provides financial support to help delegates from EECCA to attend its workshops, and it endeavours to identify relevant scientists in countries without a national focal centre. In its status reports CCE compiles information showing the variation for all critical load parameter values in each country. CCE coordinates the harmonization of the land use map, which covers the EMEP model domain and is expected to be finalized in late 2006. ICP Modelling and Mapping holds subregional workshops to harmonize calculation parameters and disseminate experiences among countries.

40. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are encouraged to evaluate and submit national data for critical loads.

Item 11. Develop health damage estimates and organize bilateral and subregional consultations (action: Task Force on Health, UNECE).

41. The WHO project “Comparative quantification of health risks”⁵ included estimation of health impacts of outdoor air pollution in major cities (population >100,000 people) of the world. The estimates have been presented for each of 23 regions of the world. WHO/Euro region countries were divided into 3 groups, with EUR-B and EUR-C consisting mostly of EECCA countries. The annual impacts of air pollution, indicated by particulate matter, estimated for these regions amounted to 84,000 premature deaths and 608,000 years of life lost.

42. These impacts constitute around 80% of all health effects attributed to air pollution in all countries of the WHO European region, even though the urban population in regions EUR-B and EUR-C constitute only 54% of the total urban population of that region.

43. More precise estimates of health impacts for each of the EECCA countries, as well as their predicted changes due to the planned emission reductions, are not at present available. Such estimates, prepared by CIAM, have been used for defining a strategy for EU countries. However, the data necessary for modelling population exposure to fine particulate matter are not available, or are not precise enough. Rough estimates, covering also the western part of EECCA can be seen on maps produced by CIAM. Some decrement of population exposure and of the health impacts can be expected in the next decade but this is less evident than in the western part of Europe.

44. According to the RAINS estimates, the current volumes of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emission in non-EU countries of the EMEP domain (mostly western part of EECCA region) are similar to the emissions in EU countries. The decrement of the emissions expected in the next 15 years is minimal, with the emissions vastly exceeding the level which could be achieved by applying the maximum technically feasible emission reduction.

45. Data from air quality monitoring is scarce but indicates that the pollution levels are high in large part of the region. Currently, WHO is analysing the air quality data from 2002–2004 obtained from Russian Federation. The results of the analysis were discussed at the ninth meeting of Task Force on Health in May 2006.

⁵ Comparative quantification of health risks: global and regional burden of disease attributable to selected major risk factors. Ezzati M et al. (eds.). World Health Organization, 2004.

Item 12. Identify abatement options and develop cost curves (action: Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues, CIAM).

46. A workshop on the state-of-the-art technologies will be organized in October 2007 in Almaty, back to back with a CAPACT workshop, with the support of Poland.

Item 13. Gather information on the manufacture and use of substances in annexes I and II of the Protocol on POPs as a preliminary step towards accession to the Protocol (action: EECCA countries).

47. At the meeting of the Heads of Delegation to the Working Group held in April 2006 in Geneva, several delegations from EECCA countries announced that a POPs inventory was under construction in their countries, most often as part of a project under the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

48. At the thirty-eighth session of the Working Group, the delegations of Georgia and the Russian Federation informed the meeting of their considerations regarding accession to the Protocol on POPs.

Item 14. Carry out a regular review of the implementation of the Action Plan (Working Group on Strategies and Review, EMEP Steering Body, Working Group on Effects).

49. The implementation of the Action Plan was discussed at the meeting of the Heads of Delegation to the Working Group, held on 19–21 April 2006 in Geneva..

III. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE STEPS

50. The secretariat has drawn the following conclusions at this stage of implementation of the Action Plan:

(a) Over the past year, there has been stronger participation by experts from the EECCA countries in the meetings of task forces and expert groups, as well as in the work of the main subsidiary bodies of the Convention. This is due partly to better support for participation from Parties, in particular lead Parties to task forces and expert groups, but also to increased interest from EECCA experts.

(b) Efforts targeted at capacity-building for air pollution monitoring and data reporting have been enhanced through initiatives of Parties and the Convention's programme centres.

(c) Several EECCA countries have indicated that they are considering accession to Convention Protocols.

(d) A particularly positive development is the strengthened bilateral cooperation with EECCA countries, for example, by the Governments of Norway, Poland and the Czech Republic.

(e) Annual contributions to the trust fund continue to increase, though the annual target has not yet been reached.

51. The Executive Body may wish, *inter alia*, to:

(a) Welcome the steps taken towards implementation of the Action Plan;

(b) Welcome the opportunity to strengthen the political commitment for accession to Protocols and implementation of the Convention at the sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Belgrade in October 2007 and invite its Bureau and the secretariat to ensure that the efforts to involve the EECCA countries in the work of the Convention are appropriately highlighted;

(c) Urge Parties to contribute to the trust fund for assisting countries with economies in transition (Project E 112) in order to reach the goals set for 2006 and 2007, and to allow the implementation of the planned activities; and

(d) Invite the Working Group on Strategies and Review to continue to review the implementation of the Action Plan and to report on progress at its twenty-fifth session in December 2007.