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“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”

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**POLICIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT – PROGRESS IN
EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

submitted by

the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme
for Central and Eastern Europe

through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials



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CAPACITY-BUILDING

**PROGRESS AND PERSPECTIVES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
STRATEGY FOR COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL
ASIA, AND OF THE CENTRAL ASIA INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**POLICIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT – PROGRESS IN
EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA¹**

1. At the Fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Kiev, 21-23 May 2003), ministers adopted the “Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region: Environmental Strategy for Countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Strategic framework”². The strategy is intended to contribute to improving environmental conditions and to implementing the WSSD³ Plan of Implementation in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia by strengthening the efforts of these countries in environmental protection and by facilitating partnership and cooperation between these countries and other countries of the UNECE region, including all stakeholders. Furthermore, the ministers invited the Task Force for the Implementation of the Environmental Action Programme for Central and Eastern Europe (EAP Task Force) to lead efforts to facilitate and support, in cooperation with other relevant international bodies and Regional Environmental Centres (RECs), the achievements of the objectives of the Environmental Partnerships Strategy by East European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries⁴.

¹ The present document is submitted on the above date due to technical reasons.

² ECE/CEP/105/Rev.1

³ World Summit on Sustainable Development.

⁴ ECE/CEP/94/Rev.1, paras. 61, 72 and 73.

2. For the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, the OECD⁵/EAP Task Force secretariat, in cooperation with other institutions active in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region – UNDP⁶, UNECE, UNEP⁷, WHO⁸, the World Bank, REC-Central and Eastern Europe, REC-Caucasus, REC-Central Asia, REC-Moldova, REC-Russia, and the non-governmental organizations network European ECO-Forum – prepared the report “Policies for a better environment – progress in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.” The report assesses the progress of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in implementing the Environmental Partnerships Strategy and documents actions taken by each country. Work on the report was also closely coordinated with the European Environment Agency’s Fourth Assessment of environmental conditions in the pan-European region, and was overseen by the EAP Task Force, which is currently co-chaired by the European Commission and Kazakhstan. The Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia governments have actively shaped the report’s objectives and structure, provided a wealth of information and reviewed its final draft. Several donors – the European Commission, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – have financially supported its preparation. The report will be available at the Conference, as well as on the OECD/EAP Task Force website (<http://www.oecd.org/env/eap/belgrade>).

3. The Conference is invited to consider the findings of the report and decide on the way forward to address the key environmental challenges facing the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme.

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme.

⁸ World Health Organization.