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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE EXPERT GROUP TO THE
UNECE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY¹**

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) assess a country's efforts to reduce its overall pollution burden and manage its natural resources; to integrate environmental and socio-economic policies; to strengthen cooperation with the international community; to harmonize environmental conditions and policies throughout Europe and North America; and, to contribute to sustainable development in the ECE region.

The ECE EPR programme has four main objectives:

- To assist countries in transition to improve their management of the environment by establishing baseline conditions and making concrete recommendations for better policy implementation and performance,
- To promote a continuous dialogue between ECE member countries by exchanging information about policies and experiences, and progress in the current transition period.
- To integrate environmental policies into sectoral policies.
- To integrate further health aspects into environmental performance.

Since 1994, fifteen countries have been reviewed through the Environmental Performance Review programme. These include: Poland (1994); Bulgaria (1995); Estonia (1995); Slovenia (1997); Belarus (1997); Republic of Moldova (1998); Lithuania (1998); Latvia (1998); Ukraine (1999); Croatia (1999); Kazakhstan (2000); Kyrgyzstan (2000); Armenia (2000); Romania (2001); and Uzbekistan (2001). Second reviews have been undertaken in Bulgaria (2000) and Estonia (2001). The Environmental Performance Reports are available as sales publications [http://www.unece.org/pub_cat/index.htm].

¹ This document has not been formally edited.

II. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN TASKS AND GOALS DURING THE FIRST AND SECOND MANDATES OF THE EPR GROUP

Establishment of an EPR Expert Group

The Committee on Environmental Policy established at its fourth session (May 1997) an Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for a period of two years in order (1) to provide guidance to the ECE secretariat and the Committee on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the EPR Programme, (2) and to assist the secretariat in coordinating the Programme with processes underway in other international institutions, and particularly in OECD. Experts from Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Ukraine were elected.

Work of the Expert Group During its First Mandate

During its first two years (1997 to 1999), the Expert Group defined its role in the organizational set-up of the EPR Programme. It helped to (a) raise awareness about both the strategic as well as practical constraints, features and options faced by environmental administrations of European countries in transition to a market economy; (b) clarify the reasonable scope of ambition as well as limits of the Committee on Environmental Policy through the EPR Programme to become a valid discussion partner for environmental ministries and other administrators concerned in the transition countries; and (c) provide the ECE secretariat with the necessary backstopping in all matters concerning the adaptation of the EPR process to the conditions of transition, and options for improving the efficiency of the Programme.

Work of the Expert Group During its Second Mandate

In September 1999, at its sixth session, the Committee on Environmental Policy renewed the mandate of the Expert Group for an additional two years. Experts from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Switzerland and Ukraine were elected.²

During its second mandate, the Expert Group met four times, in Yerevan, Armenia, 26 March 2000, and in Geneva, 21-22 September 2000, 8-9 March 2001, and 19-21 September 2001. During this period, the Expert Group addressed itself to what it had identified, in its report to the CEP in 1999,³ as the main unsolved problems, as well as other issues that became more salient over the two-year period. Among these issues were the optimisation 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. Each of these six main issues is discussed below.

Overall, the EPR Programme has been well-received by both the countries reviewed and the other Member states of ECE. Like any successful Programme, it requires continued analysis and oversight in order to improve its implementation and identify any problems that may arise.

² The current membership and terms of reference are contained in Annex II.

³ Report of the EPR Expert Group to the Committee on Environmental Policy, CEP/1999/6 of 14 July 1999. See especially Conclusions and Recommendations, paras. 27 to 30.

III. CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUP AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Optimisation of the Review Process

The Expert Group discussed ways to improve the review process, including the pre-missions, review missions, updating missions and second reviews. The main actions to be taken include the following:

The Preparatory Phases

The preparatory process could be enhanced by providing more and more-detailed information to all parties concerned, and by clearly specifying obligations and expectations. The secretariat should prepare guidelines for the review countries, delineating the procedures and expectations of the EPR Programme. These are contained in Annexes III (first reviews) and IV (second reviews). The secretariat should also prepare a manual for the international experts, giving clear guidance on their role in the overall review process and on what is expected (see Annex V).

During the pre-mission, UNECE and the Government should together develop an implementation plan for the review process. This plan should specify precisely what is required of the country, such as outputs, dates and responsible contacts, and provision of information.

The Expert Group recommends that, in order to optimise the review process, there should be a minimum period of three months between a pre-mission and a first review mission and an interval of at least two-to-three years for a second review.

The international experts should use the period between the pre-mission and the mission to collect data and begin to frame both their respective chapters and the questions and issues that require further investigation.

The Expert Group also recommends that, prior to the mission, each international expert should prepare a draft chapter that could serve as the framework for the review and increase the efficiency of the mission.

Drafting of Recommendations

To the extent possible, experts should provide recommendations that are concrete and specific, indicating who should act, what activities they should carry out, and the timeframe during which activities should be completed.

Both pre-mission and review mission should ensure that economic and social sectors, including representative ministries and institutions, as well as the environment, are more involved. This should also be reflected in the recommendations. Recommendations should also, as far as is possible, suggest the economic and social, as well as environmental, implications of the recommendations.

Dissemination of Information

Follow-up activities may involve dissemination of information, preparation of analytical papers based on the review process, the organization of workshops, linking EPR Reports with other international efforts, and monitoring of implementation two years after the Peer Review.

Dissemination of information should be geared, first and foremost, to the decision-makers and civil society of the reviewed countries. This may be done through a variety of media, but it is first essential to ensure that the reports of the Environmental Performance Reviews are provided in languages that are in common use in the reviewed countries. For some countries it may suffice to provide the report in English and Russian. Efforts are already underway within the EPR Programme to provide for official translation of the reports into Russian, as appropriate.

For other countries it is important to identify modalities for translating the reports into the primary national language. For this purpose, financial resources for translations must be provided.

In order to increase public awareness of new EPR Report, the Expert Group also recommends that the Secretariat organize press conferences in Geneva immediately following a Peer Review, taking advantage of the presence of the high-level delegates of the reviewed countries. If possible, this press conference should be video-taped and the tape provided to the respective Government officials to disseminate in their home countries. The Government of the reviewed country should also organize a press conference in its capital upon publication of the EPR Report. At the same time, UNECE, with the cooperation of UNDP, could organize a meeting of the official international community present in the country in order to introduce the EPR and to call their attention to some of the priority recommendations. On this occasion, EPR Reports should also be brought to the attention of international donors, including, for example, the World Bank, EBRD, and the PHARE and TACIS programmes.

Members of the Committee on Environmental Policy may wish to explore their potential to further distribute the EPR Reports. For this purpose, the Expert Group intends to prepare a "Catalogue of Action" that illustrates ways in which this might more effectively be done.

UNECE should employ electronic means of disseminating the Reports. It is proposed that, prior to the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe," all existing EPR reports be placed on a CD ROM, to be made available at the lowest cost possible, or, preferably, at no cost.

Better use should be made of the current EPR Web Site [<http://www.unece.org/env/epr/>], particularly since the principal target group of the EPRs consists of both official persons and civil society within countries-in-transition who could find it difficult to purchase the reports. Making this information fully available is also consistent with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration as well as the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Both pre-missions and review missions should make use of the informational brochure created by the Secretariat, and the brochure should be translated into local languages to improve its effectiveness.

Another important element of follow-up is institutional strengthening and capacity-building. ECE should explore with UNDP the possibility of twinning EPR implementation with UNDP's Capacity 21 projects in specific countries.

Workshops provide another means of follow-up. Thematic workshops could be organized within reviewed countries, at the sub-regional level, where common issues and problems could be discussed and specific areas of cooperation pursued. Such workshops, however, should be organized only when they are demand-driven.

Similarly, ECE should try to prepare analytical papers for each sub-region, based on the reviews undertaken within that sub-region. A more comprehensive analytical paper, encompassing all countries reviewed by late 2002, should be prepared as an input to the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe."

The Expert Group recommends that the Committee on Environmental Policy request the UNECE Secretariat to place all Environmental Performance Reviews on the World Wide Web in order to increase access for all people and all countries, consistent with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the Aarhus Convention.

The structure of the Peer Review

The Peer Review is the core activity around which the EPR process is organized. Careful consideration of the Report, and particularly of the recommendations contained therein, is crucial. Peer Review meetings are also time-consuming, particularly when held during the annual CEP sessions. The Expert Group considered that the Review process would be enhanced by organizing it as follows:

- For each country reviewed, an Expert Review should take place during a meeting of the EPR Expert Group prior to the annual session of the CEP;
- The Expert Group should invite experts from other interested countries to participate in these Reviews;
- Prior to the Peer Review, the Secretariat, with the support of the Expert Group, could prepare a paper that identifies significant policy issues for discussion within the CEP and interaction with the reviewed countries. Issues may be common to all reviewed countries or distinct for each;
- The Expert Group would appoint a rapporteur for each review to lead the discussion in the Peer Review during the CEP;
- The CEP could organize a Round Table or Panel, including high-level representatives from both the reviewed and reviewing countries to discuss the significant policy issues identified during the expert review;
- The CEP would draw its conclusions based on the Roundtable and the results of the Expert Review and adopt its recommendations accordingly.

The Expert Group recommends that the Committee on Environmental Policy decide to organize its Peer Reviews as described in the preceding paragraphs.

Closure of the First Round of Reviews

Including the three countries reviewed in cooperation with OECD, fifteen countries have undergone Environmental Performance Reviews under the ECE EPR Programme for countries-in-transition and three more are scheduled in the coming months.

It is the opinion of the Expert Group that the first round of Reviews be closed by early 2003, prior to the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe."

The Expert Group recommends that the Committee on Environmental Policy decide that the Fifth Ministerial Conference (Kiev, May 2003) should be the target date for closing the first round of Environmental Performance Reviews; and call upon all interested and eligible countries to request a first EPR on an urgent basis.

Cooperation

The EPR Programme has benefited from excellent cooperation with UNEP/ROE and WHO EURO, both of which have consistently provided an expert staff person to participate in the review missions. UNDP has also provided good support at the country level, including information, advice and facilities. It is suggested that this

cooperation should be further strengthened. Other country-level offices, such as those of the World Bank, have also been helpful in the review missions.

Cooperation with the World Bank throughout the entire review process should be strengthened. Further, cooperation with OECD needs to be renewed. In this regard, OECD's participation in the meetings of the Expert Group should be continued. It might be useful to invite OECD to provide an expert to accompany selected UNECE EPR missions. It is also suggested that UNECE organize a joint meeting with OECD to exchange information on lessons learned, future directions, and so forth, in the EPR process. An invitation from OECD to UNECE to participate in some of its missions would also be welcome.

UNECE is requested to explore opportunities for engaging its Regional Advisors in the EPR process.

The Expert Group

During the period of its second mandate, in particular, the Expert Group has taken an increasingly active role in preparing the Peer Reviews by the Committee on Environmental Policy. In view of its demonstrated value, and taking into account the augmented role recommended for it in forthcoming Peer Reviews, the mandate of the Expert Group should be extended.

The Expert Group recommends that the Committee on Environmental Policy decide:

- **To extend the current mandate of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Environmental Performance for an additional period of two years.**
- **To increase the number of members of the Expert Group from eight to a total of twelve.**
- **That it adopt the terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Expert Group contained in Annex I.**

ANNEX I

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE EXPERT GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Membership

The Expert Group should be comprised of from eight to twelve members, with due consideration to geographical balance among countries in the region.

It is suggested that, when new members are being chosen, due regard be given to experts from countries that have recently been reviewed.

Terms of Reference

1. The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy renews the mandate of the Ad Hoc ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance for a period of two years for the purposes of:

- Carrying out the Expert Review process prior to the Peer Review to be undertaken by the Committee on Environmental Policy;
- Providing guidance to the ECE secretariat and the Committee on all substantive and organizational matters arising in the implementation of the ECE programme of Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs); and
- Assisting the ECE secretariat in coordinating the ECE EPR Programme, with processes under way in other international institutions that have a bearing on it, notably the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Environmental Performance Review Programme.

2. The guidance of the Expert Group to ECE and the Committee will include:

- identification of opportunities and requirements for improving the conduct of the EPRs (including data needs, indicators and methodologies);
- assessment of environmental trends relevant to the EPR process in countries in transition, including the organization of joint meetings, seminars and workshops at regional and sub-regional levels, where these are demand-driven;
- review and improvement of the data and information used for the EPR;
- drawing-up proposals for follow-up to EPRs to be submitted to the Committee, taking into account other relevant international activities, including those undertaken by UNEP, WHO, the World Bank, EBRD and the OECD EPR programme, and those related to the European Union approximation process;
- drawing-up proposals on how to improve the procedure for adoption of the recommendations contained in the EPR country reports and their implementation.

3. The EPR Expert Group is elected by the Committee on Environmental Policy. The secretariat will invite international institutions pursuing related work to participate in the work of the EPR Expert Group.

4. The EPR Expert Group determines its rules of procedure in accordance with the relevant provisions of its terms of reference and elects its Chair.

5. The EPR Expert Group will report annually on its activities to the Committee on Environmental Policy, and may raise any issue that it deems necessary for the implementation of its mandate with the Committee.

ANNEX II

MEMBERS OF THE EXPERT GROUP

Mr. Dhimiter HAXHIMIHALI
Advisor, National Environmental Agency
Tirana, **ALBANIA**

Ms. Vanya GRIGOROVA
Director, Ministry of Environment and Water
Sofia, **BULGARIA**

Ms. Stella SATALIC
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning
Zagreb, **CROATIA**

Mr. Harry LIIV
Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Environment
Tallinn, **ESTONIA**

Mr. Karl TIETMANN
Federal Environmental Agency
Berlin, **GERMANY**

Mr. Carlo SANTORO
ECOCLUB
Rome, ITALY

Mr. Ramil DISSEMBAYEV
National Environmental Centre of Sustainable Development
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
Kokshetau, **KAZAKHSTAN**

Mr. Adriaan OUDEMAN
Directorate-General for Environmental Protection
Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment
The Hague, **NETHERLANDS**

Ms. Sibylle VERMONT
Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape
Berne, **SWITZERLAND**

Mr. Vitaly POTAPOV
Advisor, Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety
Kiev, **UKRAINE**

ANNEX III

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW COUNTRIES: FIRST REVIEW

Introduction

The structure of the complete Environmental Performance Review report consists of three main parts divided into between eight and fourteen chapters, depending upon the needs of the country:

- the framework for environmental policy (e.g., the policy and legal framework; economic instruments; international cooperation);
- management of pollution and natural resources (e.g., air, water, waste and biodiversity) and
- sectoral environmental integration (e.g., industry, agriculture, energy, transport, tourism, and health).

Requirements and responsibilities for a country under review

The Environmental Performance Review is prepared with participation of experts from UNECE member States and the UNECE secretariat. The quality of the Review, and especially its conclusions and recommendations, depends on the quality of information and data that the country provides, the extent of preparation for, during and following the Pre-mission and the conduct of the Mission itself. The country under review should make all efforts to help international experts with providing all necessary information and statistical data for the preparation of the EPR.

There are six stages in a full review process:

1. The official request and its approval;
2. Preparation for the Pre-Mission;
3. The Pre-Mission;
4. Preparation for the Mission;
5. The Mission and its immediate aftermath;
6. Expert and Peer Reviews; and
7. Follow-up to the Review.

1. The Official Request: A Government, at the level of Minister, must officially request an Environmental Performance Review. The request is made to the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, through the Secretariat. The request is considered and approved by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP)

2. Preparation for the Pre-mission: The UNECE Secretariat will schedule a pre-mission at a time convenient to the authorities of the country to be reviewed. Prior to the pre-mission, it is important that the responsible authority (usually the Ministry of Environment, or its equivalent) consult among its staff and with staff of other ministries to begin the process of identifying the issues that need to be reviewed. Based on these consultations, the responsible authority should submit to the secretariat a draft proposal for the structure of the EPR with a description of the main environmental problems that the country faces. For each issue (chapter) suggested for the structure, the authority should identify a national expert who will serve as focal point.

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Pre-Mission, the Government should also prepare by beginning to assemble as much written information as possible for each of the major issues (chapters). Wherever possible, this information should include indicators, statistics, tables and graphs, as well as analytical and descriptive material.

The Secretariat will propose an agenda for the Pre-Mission for comments by and approval of the Government.

3. The Pre-Mission: The Secretariat generally schedules a Pre-Mission for a period of two working days. It is important that this time be well organized and used to full advantage.

The responsible authority should organise one plenary meeting with representatives of all concerned Ministries and a number of small meetings with experts from these Ministries. These meetings are important for three reasons: to assist the Secretariat to understand the situation in the country and to plan the mission, and to inform decision-makers and experts in the country about the EPR process.

The representatives of the responsible authority should actively participate throughout. At the end of this process, the responsible authority and the Secretariat should reach agreement on the final structure of the EPR, and this should be approved by the relevant Minister or Deputy Minister during the Pre-Mission.

Before the end of the Pre-Mission, the Government should provide all available information of relevance to the issues identified in the structure. This information should be provided in one of the official languages of UNECE (English, French and Russian), and preferably in English.

During the Pre-mission, the Secretariat and the Government will develop an implementation plan. This plan will include all organisational and financial questions, including, for example, those related to interpretation and internal transportation. The plan will also specify deadlines concerning further steps of the EPR preparation, such as submission of additional information, communication with focal points, and so forth.

4. Preparation for the Mission: The Secretariat will identify and enter into contract with an international expert for each of the issues (chapters) in the agreed structure of the EPR. These international experts will undertake substantial preparation for the mission, participate in the mission, and prepare a chapter following the mission.

As discussed in the section above, by the end of the Pre-mission, agreement should be reached on additional requirements for information that must be submitted to the secretariat in a timely manner. Failure to do so can jeopardize the value of the mission. The Secretariat, as soon as it receives this information, will forward it to the international experts for the preparation of preliminary draft chapters of the review. Reliability, quality and timeliness of the information submitted are of the highest importance for EPR process.

Where information provided by the country is insufficient for the international expert to prepare for the mission adequately, the Secretariat will so inform the national focal point. It may be necessary at that stage to reopen the decision about the structure of the report and change one or more of the topics to be reviewed.

If there are changes in the proposed national experts during the Pre-Mission, the implementation plan will require that the country submit the final list of national expert focal points by a specified date shortly after the completion of the Pre-Mission. The Secretariat will provide this list to the international experts who will begin to communication with the national experts as part of their mission preparation.

During this preparatory stage, the Secretariat will prepare an agenda for the Mission for discussion with the responsible authority in the review country. This may also be prepared during the Pre-Mission.

5. The EPR Mission and its Immediate Aftermath: During the mission, the responsible authority (usually the Ministry of the Environment) in co-operation with other Ministries and institutions involved **should:**

- Organise a plenary meeting (one-half day) with participation of all international experts and representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, all national Focal points and the representatives of other Ministries and institutions concerned;
- Provide interpretation during the meetings and translation of the main documents into English;
- Organise one or two field visits (3-4 days) to regions which are faced with serious environmental problems, for example industrial areas, protected zones etc;
- Organise individual meetings on all topics covered by the structure of the EPR. These are small and informal meetings between the local specialists and the relevant international expert. Local specialists from different Ministries and institutions should be included;
- Provide all necessary information required by the international experts for the preparation of all chapters;
- Provide interpretation for the small, informal meetings, as required;
- Provide local transportation.

Within the first weeks after the Mission, the international experts prepare the first drafts of their Chapters. In many cases national focal points should be available to the international experts for additional information or to check and update statistical data.

When a draft EPR is ready, the secretariat provides the conclusions and recommendations to the responsible national authority for comments. Finalization of the draft recommendations will occur only after the Government has had an opportunity to express its point of view.

6. Expert and Peer Reviews: The EPR report is reviewed in two stages. During the first stage, the ad hoc EPR Expert Group conducts an expert review of the report, and particularly its conclusions and recommendations, in detail. During the second stage, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy carries out a Peer Review, focussing especially on the major policy questions raised during the course of the review.

It is essential for both reviews that the country be fully represented at a high level. Generally, the country delegation consists of from four-to-five specialists led by the relevant Minister or Deputy Minister. The delegation should be prepared to respond to all questions posed by the experts during the expert review and by the delegations during the Peer Review.

7. Follow-up of EPR: During this stage a country under review should begin to implement the recommendations. This process should be co-ordinated and managed by the responsible authority (usually the Ministry of the Environment) in co-operation with other Ministries and institutions involved.

In approximately one to one and a half years after publication of the EPR, the Secretariat, with representatives of the responsible authority, should examine the status of implementation of the recommendations made in the review. The responsible authority should facilitate and help the Secretariat conduct this examination.

The preparation of the second EPR may be conducted three-to-five years after publishing the first review. (Please refer to Guidelines for Candidate Countries for the Second Review.

To initiate a review, contact the UNECE Secretariat, as follows:

Environmental Performance and Governance Team
Division for Environment and Human Settlements
UN Economic Commission for Europe
1211 Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: (+41-22) 917 0630
E-mail: mary.pat.silveira@unece.org

ANNEX IV

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW COUNTRIES: SECOND REVIEW

Purpose of a Second Environmental Performance Review Mission

Second Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) are directed to Countries in Transition in the UNECE Region that have already submitted to a first comprehensive Review. The interval between a first comprehensive review and a second review should be at least three years, and should take place only when there has been clear progress in the environmental situation of the Country. Similar to the first Environmental Performance Review, the Second Review is a voluntary exercise.

Content of a Second Review

The second EPR contains:

- A broad assessment of developments since the preceding comprehensive EPR. It covers environmental policies, strategies and instruments and the environmental matters relevant to the Country; for example, air, water, waste, soils, natural resources and biodiversity and the integration of environmental concerns in other sector of activities.
- A few –usually no more than five- issues that are topical and critical for the environmental management of the country, and on which the Country needs to be advised. These topical issues should be narrow and specific. They are identified together by the Country under review and the secretariat and should cover both national and international priorities. They are assessed by foreign experts who are specialists on the issue.
- A review of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the first comprehensive EPR.

Tasks and Commitments of the Candidate Country

There are five stages in the second review process:

- The official request and its approval;
- Preparation for the Pre-Mission;
- The Pre-Mission;
- Preparation for the Mission;
- The Mission and its immediate aftermath; and
- Expert and Peer Reviews

Request, Preparation and Pre-Mission

The Country officially expresses its intention to be re-reviewed through an official letter to the Secretariat and an oral statement at the CEP annual session.

After examination by the EPR Ad Hoc Expert Group (the official guiding body of the EPR Programme), the candidate Country will be officially accepted by the CEP.

In preparation for the Pre-Mission, the responsible authority precisely identifies the priority issues that will constitute the core part of the report. During the Pre-Mission, the Government will justify these choices.

Before the Pre-Mission, the Secretariat will ask the country to nominate a national focal person responsible for the project. All information will then flow between this focal person and the Secretariat coordinator.

The Country will be asked to send all relevant information that can be useful to prepare the report. The Secretariat will set up the team of experts according to the selected topics.

The candidate Country commits itself to provide openly to the secretariat and its experts all relevant information on the matters that will be covered in the review. This information would preferably be transmitted in computerized form, or if unfeasible in paper copies in advance of the pre-mission.

The pre-mission involves two secretariat staff (the leader and the coordinator) during two working days in the Country. It will confirm the selected topics (final structure of the report), checking the environmental information needs and prepare the assessment mission.

As in the first EPR Review, the Secretariat and the responsible authority in the Government will agree on an implementation plan that will include all organisational and financial questions, including, for example, those related to interpretation and internal transportation. The plan will also specify deadlines concerning further steps of the EPR preparation, such as submission of additional information, communication with focal points, and so forth. The Government will also be requested to nominate a national expert focal point for **each** topical issue (chapter).

The Mission

The secretariat will compose the EPR Team of international experts so that their professional experience and background best fit to efficiently analyse and assess the selected issues. As for a first EPR, these experts will be from other UNECE member countries of east and west Europe.

The assessment mission lasts about ten days and involves the experts of the EPR Team and the national experts and focal points. The focal point, preferably a specialist on the issue, will be the counterpart of the international expert. She/he will assist the expert during the mission to facilitate the investigations, to organise the schedule, contact the relevant counterparts and make appointments.

The candidate country will deploy all its efforts during the assessment mission so that the EPR experts meet with all relevant national experts and discuss with them without restriction. Under the guidance of the Secretariat, the country will organize the mission and mobilize its staff so that not only the authorities in charge of environment, but also all other stakeholders (other ministries, business world and NGOs) may be involved, as requested.

After the draft has been compiled by the secretariat, the recommendations it contains and the factual part of the core text will be submitted to the Country for comments and checking.

Expert and Peer Reviews

Finally, the report of the second review will be reviewed in two stages. During the first stage, the ad hoc EPR Expert Group conducts an expert review of the report, and particularly its conclusions and recommendations, in detail. During the second stage, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy carries out a Peer Review, focussing on the environmental situation and management methods of the country on the basis of the

experience of other countries and of the common Pan-European environmental policies and objectives. The recommendations contained in the report will be addressed by the peers to the reviewed country. It is essential for both reviews that the country be fully represented at a high level.

The expert review will take place usually during the week before the annual session of the CEP. A full day of discussions will be scheduled between a delegation of the reviewed Country and the EPR Expert Group. The results of this expert review will be presented to the CEP, at its regular session, both by the Head of the reviewed country delegation and a designated rapporteur from the Expert Group. All states Members of the CEP may participate in the ensuing discussions. At the conclusion of this item, the CEP will adopt the recommendations.

It is responsibility of the reviewed Country to implement the recommendations.

The duration of a second EPR is about a year, and the chronology of events comparable to that of a first EPR.

To initiate a second review, please contact the UNECE secretariat:

Environmental Performance and Governance
Division for Environment and Human Settlements
UN Economic Commission for Europe
1211 Geneva, Switzerland
Fax: 41-22 917-0630
E-mail: mary.pat.silveira@unece.org

Additional information is available at the following web site: www.unece.org/env/epr

ANNEX V

MANUAL FOR INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

The Overall Context

When writing the assessment, it is important to know to whom the assessment is addressed (the audience), its purpose and the expected output.

The Audience: The Environmental Performance Review report is addressed primarily to decision makers in the government administration, but also to donor countries, International Financing Institutions (IFIs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the business sector. When writing the assessment, adjust the style and tone to this audience.

The Purpose: The purpose of the assessment is threefold:

- To assist countries in transition to improve their management of the environment by establishing baseline conditions and making concrete recommendations for better policy implementation and performance,
- To promote a continuous dialogue among ECE member countries by exchanging information about policies and experiences, and progress in the current transition period, consistent with the overall objectives of the Pan European region (see: <http://www.unece.org/env/europe/welcome.html>);
- To integrate environmental policies into sectoral policies.

Expected Output from the Expert: The immediate output of the Environmental Performance Review mission is the drafting of the Environmental Performance Review report, including recommendations. (See details below.) Subsequent to this, the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy will conduct a Peer Review with the reviewed country, based on the report of the Environmental Performance Review.

Each expert prepares a chapter for the Environmental Performance Review. Each of these chapters is critical to the overall review process. It should be prepared as detailed below, in a timely manner and consistent with the overall purpose of the EPR programme.

The Structure of the Report of the Environmental Performance Review:

The structure of the complete Environmental Performance Review report for a first Review consists of three main parts divided into eight to fourteen chapters, depending upon the needs of the country:

- the framework for environmental policy (e.g., the policy and legal framework; economic instruments; international cooperation);
- management of pollution and natural resources (e.g., air, water, waste and biodiversity) and
- sectoral environmental integration (e.g., industry, agriculture, energy, transport, tourism, and health).

The structure of a **second Review** generally includes the following:

- A broad assessment of developments since the preceding comprehensive EPR;
- A few –usually no more than five- issues that are topical and critical for the environmental management of the country, and on which the Country needs to be advised;
- A review of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the first comprehensive EPR.

The Drafting Process

Preparation of the chapters is the responsibility of the respective experts. The secretariat will assist to the extent possible in providing the expert with information that is collected from a number of sources, with overall guidance and with logistical support during the missions. The country focal points will assist also with providing information as well as with establishing a schedule of interviews in-country. However, it is finally the expert who must ensure, through the mission and direct communication with the focal point, that she/he has all of the materials and information necessary for preparation of a chapter.

Draft chapter: The ECE Secretariat provides each expert with the outline for his/her chapter and with whatever documents may be collected in advance, including detailed information about the environmental issues in the country to be reviewed. The expert is expected to collect further information and, based on the outline, prepare a draft chapter prior to the mission. The draft should include formulated questions on the information needs that the expert wants to resolve during the mission. Special attention should be given to statistical data requirements. The draft should be sent to the Secretariat no later than two weeks before the review mission.

Chapter Structure: The chapter should consist of three main sections. The first section should provide a description of the current status of the issue within the country, along with relevant policy objectives and responses. This discussion should also be put in the context of the “Environment for Europe” process (EfE), the transition process and, where applicable, the EU enlargement process.

Every effort should be made to avoid only summing up policies, strategies and laws or providing long lists of policy and legal elements without comment. Rather, it is important to describe and clarify the relationships among the various policies, strategies and laws and explain what they really mean in the context of the country under review.

The second part will assess the factual descriptive part. It contains an evaluation of environmental performance, especially in terms of the objectives of the country itself and will discuss obstacles to progress, and main impacts on the environment, and, where possible, on the economy. Make a clear distinction between achievements and areas for progress, and between intentions, actions and results. Try to avoid mixing facts and assessment; the factual description (first part) should fully substantiate the assessment (second part).

The third part contains conclusions and recommendations. It is important that no new information is provided here as conclusions and recommendations should follow logically from the factual and assessment part. Each recommendation should be preceded by an introductory text that will justify the corresponding recommendation. Between 5 and 7 recommendations are sufficient.

Each recommendation should indicate to whom it is addressed. They should include the timeframe for implementation and, if possible, a cost-estimate. Recommendations must also be concrete, measurable and realistic.

Special Web site: A special website is available with information about the reviewed country and links to relevant Internet websites [<http://www.unece.org/unece/env/epr/experts/country>]. A sample chapter is available on this website as an example.

Appointments and Interviews: Each expert will be teamed with a national counterpart. Questions and requests for appointments should be forwarded to the counterpart in due time. The counterpart will help you during the

review mission with the collection of information and the arrangement of appointments with officials, institutes and organisations.

Post-Mission Submission of Chapter: After the review mission the chapter has to be sent by email to the Secretariat within a maximum period of two weeks (the exact deadline agreed during the review mission). No exceptions can be made to this deadline due to editing, printing and translation requirements. The Secretariat will read and discuss the chapter and, if necessary, return it to the expert with requests for clarification or additional information. Refining of the chapter must be completed as soon as possible, and usually within one week.

Formatting

Length: The chapter should not exceed 12 pages, excluding graphs and tables

Style: The style of writing should be concise (to the point) and precise. In their drafting, experts should also use active voice as often as possible.

Language: The chapter should be written in English. Editing will be done by the Secretariat and, where necessary, translations will be made in official UN languages.

Format: The chapter should be delivered in a WORD file. Use font "Times New Roman", font size 12; single line spacing; no formatting (bold, italic, etc.), as this will be done according to UN standards. Write abbreviations at least once in full and add a list of references (no referencing in the text), including the visited Internet websites).

Figures and tables: The figures and tables should be provided in a *separate* EXCEL file. Ensure that the data used for the graphics and figures are included in the EXCEL file. Always indicate sources of the data (author, name book or report and year of publication). Do not incorporate the figures and tables into the text: just indicate where they should be placed in the text. An explanation and analysis of the tables and figures should be provided in the text.
