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High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING
ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH
Geneva, 5 July 2002**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Meeting was convened to follow-up to the First High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, (Geneva, 4 May 2001) in order to decide on the further steps to be taken for moving towards transport sustainable for health and the environment in the region, on the basis of the mandated background work carried out by the Joint UNECE-WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health and by the UNECE and WHO/Euro secretariats¹.

2. The Meeting was attended by Ministers and representatives from the transport, environment and health sectors of the following 38 Member countries of UNECE and WHO/Euro: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Yugoslavia. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), European Commission (EC),

¹ All documents of the High-level Meeting may be downloaded from the relevant UNECE and WHO websites (<http://www.unece.org/poja> , <http://www.euro.who.int/transport>).

European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), Regional Environmental Center (REC), Aviation Environment Federation, European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), International Road Federation (IRF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), European Federation for Transport and the Environment (T&E), International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) and International Touring Alliance/ International Automobile Association (AIT/FIA).

3. The meeting adopted its agenda and elected its Co-chairpersons as follows: Mr. Antoly Nasonov, First Deputy Minister of Transport, Russian Federation for agenda item 3 on "Mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Joint Action (POJA)"; Mrs. Jozica Maucec Zakotnik, State Secretary of Health, Slovenia for agenda item 4 on "Evaluation of the implementation of the London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health"; Mr. Heinz Schreiber, Director General Emeritus, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria for agenda item 5 on "Follow-up to the First High-level Meeting" and Mr. Hugo von Meijenfeldt, Deputy Director for International Affairs, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands for agenda item 6 on "Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration".

4. Participants were welcomed by Mrs. Brigita Schmögnerová, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Executive Secretary of the UNECE as well as by Dr. Roberto Bertolini, Director of the Division for Technical Support of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in representation of Dr. Marc Danzon, Director of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

II. MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF JOINT ACTION (POJA) AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LONDON CHARTER ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

5. The opening speeches were followed by the presentation and endorsement of the Mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Joint Action (POJA) (ECE/AC.21/2002/3) (agenda item 3) and of the Evaluation of the implementation of the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health (EUR/02/5040828/3) (agenda item 4):

(a) The Mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Joint Action (POJA) was prepared by the UNECE secretariat in accordance with the mandate given by the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997). The review showed a number of significant achievements made under the Programme of Joint Action (POJA) but outlined also a number of difficulties encountered in its implementation during the past year. The lack of participation of countries in transition was specifically mentioned in this respect. The Chair of the session stressed the need to overcome these difficulties in the future work in order to achieve progress in this field on a Pan-European scale. The report made clear that this future work will focus on those priority areas drawn from

the POJA that have been agreed upon by the High-level Meeting and be undertaken within the joint framework of the UNECE and WHO/Euro.

(b) The evaluation of the implementation of the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, was prepared by the WHO/Euro secretariat in accordance with the decisions taken by the Charter Steering Group at its fifth meeting (Malta, 8-9 October 2001). The evaluation report summarized the main successes as well as the major limitations, which were to a great extent of the same nature as the ones experienced with the POJA implementation. The Chair of the session emphasized in addition the need for a greater involvement from the health side in the future cross-sectoral cooperation.

6. Mr. Corrado CLINI, Director General of the Ministry for the Environment and the Territory of Italy, and co-Chairperson of the European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) provided the Meeting with an update on the preparation of the 4th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health “The Future For Our Children”, that will take place in Budapest on 23-25 June 2004. The Conference will be an important milestone where progress achieved at the Pan-European level on Transport, Health and Environment, with a special focus on children, will be reported.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

7. The Meeting discussed agenda item 5 on “Follow-up to the First High-level Meeting”, focusing on:

(a) the appropriateness of starting negotiations of a framework convention on transport, environment and health to address the priority issues as identified by the Joint WHO/Euro – UNECE Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health on the basis of the extensive preparatory work carried out on the legal options available;

(b) the proposed establishment of a Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme² intended to focus the joint UNECE and WHO/Euro activities on a few key priority areas, drawn from the Vienna POJA and the London Charter, where international action could have a real impact; i.e. integration of environmental and health aspects into transport policy, demand side management and modal shift as well as urban transport. When implementing these areas specific attention was to be given to the specific needs of the Newly Independent States (NIS) and to South Eastern European countries as well as to ecologically particularly sensitive areas of the region. THE PEP also proposes to streamline these activities through the setting up

² Draft Transport, Health and the Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP), ECE/AC.21/2002/5 - EUR/02/5040828/5.

of a tripartite intergovernmental body, the Steering Committee on Transport, Environment and Health, to replace the organs established under the Vienna and London follow-up processes.

8. The Meeting commended the UNECE and WHO/Euro secretariats on the development of THE PEP and of the other background documents to the meeting with the assistance of consultants, as well as on the support provided to the work of the Joint UNECE WHO Ad-Hoc Working Group on Transport, Environment and Health in carrying out the work requested by the First High-level Meeting.

9. In its statement, the Danish Presidency of the European Union underlined that the integration of environmental and health concerns into transport policy is a prerequisite for sustainable development which requires ministerial commitment as well as an adequate operational basis to be successful. The EU Member States estimated that THE PEP is the means by which it will be possible to make an important contribution towards that end across the Pan-European region and should therefore deserve all parties' full attention for the years to come.

10. The adoption of THE PEP as the strategic basis for further action in the region was also supported by a number of countries with economies in transition. The implementation oriented approach and the specific attention to the specific needs of Newly Independent States (NIS) and the South Eastern European countries was welcomed in particular.

11. In his summary of the discussion, Mr. Schreiber, the Chairperson of this agenda item, highlighted the following key points:

- (a) There was unanimous support for the establishment of THE PEP.
- (b) THE PEP represents the present common denominator for action at the Pan-European level, and an opportunity to strengthen co-operation between international organizations.
- (c) Activities proposed for implementation under THE PEP should have a clear added value.
- (d) Special attention in the implementation of THE PEP will need to be paid to aspects related to subsidiarity and issues of countries with economies in transition.
- (e) The estimated costs for the implementation of actions proposed in the annex to THE PEP should be further developed.
- (f) The Governing Bodies of the UNECE and WHO were requested to give higher priority and support with adequate resources from their regular budget to the work to be provided by the WHO and UNECE secretariats.
- (g) A number of Member States pledged financial and in-kind support to THE PEP implementation, as follows: **the Netherlands** pledged € 50,000 (pending confirmation from the new Government) to support actions related to urban transport in countries in transition, with a focus on speed limits enforcement; **Finland** pledged € 20,000 and expert assistance, to be directed towards supporting actions on capacity building and effects on health of subsidies; Norway pledged € 20,000; **Belgium** and **Italy** would consider voluntary contributions to topics to be specified later; **The United Kingdom** is

interested in: facilitating participation of NIS and South Eastern European countries; developing guidelines for public participation in decision-making related to transport; translating into Russian of relevant key United Kingdom documents; supporting the Clearing House (pending confirmation of its operational details, and support from other Member States); **Spain** pledged in-kind support through resources made available at national level for urban transport; **Switzerland** pledged in-kind support to develop work in the area of methodological developments for the economic valuation of transport-related health effects and internalization of those costs; **Austria** expressed interest in focusing future work on aspects related to integration between the transport, health and environment sectors at the pan-European level, building also on the OECD Guidelines for Environmental Sustainable Transport (EST), promotion of modal shifts for freight transport, methodological developments for the economic valuation of transport-related health effects (in collaboration with France, Malta, Sweden and Switzerland) and implementation of a Clearing House on Transport, Environment and Health.

- (h) Although most States do not consider starting negotiations of a Framework Convention on Transport, Environment and Health as an appropriate action at the present moment, THE PEP leaves this option still open for future consideration.

IV. MINISTERIAL PANEL “MOVING TOWARDS TRANSPORT SUSTAINABLE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH – A REGIONAL MESSAGE TO JOHANNESBURG”

12. The panel was chaired by Mr. Thomas Zeltner, Director General of Health, Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland and attended by Minister Mr. Censu Galea, Ministry of the Transport and the Communications (Malta); Minister Mr. Mustafa Xhani, Ministry of Health (Albania); Mr. Antoly Nasonov, First Deputy Minister of Transport, (Russian Federation); Mrs. Jozica Maucec Zakotnik, State Secretary of Health, (Slovenia); Vice-Minister Zaal Lomtadze, Ministry of Environmental Protection (Georgia) and Mr. Gaudenz Silberschmidt, Executive Director International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE).

13. Participants in the Ministerial panel shared the experience of their respective countries in making progress towards transport sustainable for health and the environment, and expressed their support to the THE PEP as a means for effectively promoting sustainability throughout the Pan-European region. They stressed the challenges and opportunities of developing stronger cross-sectoral partnerships, as well as of promoting and facilitating greater co-operation between the different parts of the Region. They also stressed how there is a shared responsibility for health, which goes beyond the health sector, and highlighted the importance of sharing experiences, disseminating information and building capacity in implementing sustainable transport strategies and projects, and the potential added value of establishing a Clearing House on Transport, Environment and Health, available also in Russian. They stressed the importance of financial instruments and international financial institutions in helping re-directing

development towards paths that fully integrate health and environmental concerns into transport strategies and infrastructure development.

14. Other issues highlighted by the panelists and in interventions from the floor included: the importance of raising awareness of the public on the health and environmental burden that individual choices regarding mobility put on society as a means to promoting behavioural changes; the role that Governments can play in promoting these behavioural changes; the importance of being ready not only to share with others the good practices developed, but also to learn from others' experiences; the need to promote a more constructive collaboration between Ministries of transport, health and environment to achieve commonly shared goals ; the importance of getting a greater involvement and awareness by the transport users to support measures for cost internalization and fiscal measures; the need to provide feasible alternatives as a necessary tool to promote behavioral changes.

V. ADOPTION OF A MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

15. The Meeting adopted the Ministerial Declaration on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariats³ where member States:

- (a) Express their desire to convey to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August to 4 September 2002) that European countries will further strengthen the implementation of the relevant provisions of Agenda 21 through national actions and a concrete regional initiative in which, in an effective manner, national and international activities are coordinated and advanced with a view to integrating environmental and health aspects into transport policies.
- (b) Decide to establish the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) as a means towards that end, to be administered under the auspices of UNECE and WHO/Euro, and which will be the means whereby the London and Vienna processes will be taken forward.
- (c) Requested the three Co-Chairpersons of the Meeting to transmit the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) to the secretariat of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to be considered as part of the list of partnerships, which will be presented in Johannesburg within the framework of the "type two outcomes" of the Summit.
- (d) Commit to ensure effective implementation of THE PEP including through allocation of adequate resources and financial means for carrying out the activities under the rationalized priorities, and to ensure adequate participation of representatives of NIS and South Eastern European countries.

³ Draft Declaration, ECE/AC.21/2002/7 - EUR/02/5040828/7.

- (e) Recognize that negotiation of a Framework Convention on Transport, Environment and Health seems to be premature and should not be pursued for the time being, and that the question of whether to start negotiations of a framework convention could be re-examined on the occasion of the next High-level Meeting, taking place not later than 2007, in light of progress of THE PEP.

16. The Declaration (ECE/AC.21/2002/8 - EUR/02/5040828/8) and the document on THE PEP (ECE/AC.21/2002/9 - EUR/02/5040828/9) as adopted by the Second High-level Meeting may be accessed and downloaded from the relevant UNECE and WHO websites: <http://www.unece.org/poja> , <http://www.euro.who.int/transport>).
