

### Environment

## UNECE to launch Environmental Performance Review of Morocco

Upon request from the Moroccan authorities, UNECE will carry out an Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Morocco. A review mission is planned for September 2012, with the aim of finalizing the report in the first half of 2013.

The review will cover 14 areas of particular importance to Morocco, including policy making, planning and implementation, the financing of environmental policies and projects, and the integration of environmental concerns into economic sectors, in particular agriculture and tourism. Other areas under review will include air pollution, water management, waste management, biodiversity and protected areas. Health issues will also be covered.

The review process, the first to take place in a country outside the UNECE region, will be carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), of which Morocco is a member State. The preparatory mission conducted in Rabat at the beginning of March by UNECE, with participation of a UNECA representative, demonstrated a high level of commitment of all major governmental and international stakeholders involved in environmental matters. □

For more information on the EPR Programme, please visit:  
<http://www.unece.org/env/epr/welcome.htm>.

### Trade

## A Common Regulatory Framework for equipment and services in explosive atmospheres

The UNECE's Common Regulatory Framework for the explosive environment sector was presented last week to the first International Conference for Equipment and Services in Explosive Atmospheres. The conference gathered more than 200 experts from business, standards-setting bodies, and regulatory authorities from more than 20 countries and was held in Dubai on 20 and 21 March 2012. With about 10% of the world oil reserves and 20% of natural gas resources, the United Arab Emirates was a natural location for this conference.

The conference was organized, in conjunction with UNECE, by the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the IEC System for Certification for Standards relating to Equipment for Use in Explosive Atmosphere (IECEx) and the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA).

The initial impetus of the Conference came from ESMA's intention to begin implementation of the UNECE's common regulatory framework which lays out the key features of a regulatory system, and can be directly put to use by countries that do not have regulations in this sector.

While standards are already being extensively applied by local industry in the United Arab Emirates, ESMA is now developing a mandatory technical regulation in the explosive environments sector. Mohammed Badri, ESMA Acting Director

General, said that "lessons learned at the Conference will contribute to shape the new regulatory system".

In developing the regulation, ESMA will refer to international standards, most importantly those developed by IEC, and used by business and regulatory authorities throughout the world. While standards are essential, they need to be properly applied. According to the Executive Secretary of IECEx, Chris Agius: "The mission of the IECEx system is to ensure that equipment conforms to the standards, that it is installed and repaired in conformity with industry best practice, and that all the personnel who work in these environments are competent".

The conference was also an important point of reference for other attending countries that are developing regulations in this sector. These included the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, which are developing joint technical regulations in this field, and were represented at the conference by NANIO CCVE, a Russian certification body. □

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## UNECE Water Convention celebrates 20 years of transboundary water cooperation as it prepares to go global

UNECE's Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention), adopted in Helsinki on 17 March 1992, celebrates its twentieth anniversary. It is the only international framework agreement in force on transboundary freshwater.

During these past two decades, the pan-European region has become the most advanced in terms of cooperation on transboundary waters. Many river basin agreements are based on the Convention, such as the Danube River Protection Convention, the agreements on Lake Peipsi and on the Sava, Meuse, Rhine and Scheldt Rivers, or, further to the East, the bilateral agreements between countries in Eastern Europe established since the mid-1990s, among them the Kazakh-Russian, Russian-Ukrainian and Moldovan-Ukrainian agreements, just to mention a few.

The Convention has also provided an invaluable framework to support the step-by-step approximation of the Central and Eastern European countries that acceded to the European Union (EU) in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements.

Today, 37 UNECE countries and the European Union are participating in the Convention. Among these States Parties there is increased awareness of the necessity for transboundary cooperation to ensure that transboundary waters are used reasonably and equitably, and that transboundary impacts from pollution and development are prevented or at least reduced.

Over these past 20 years, the work under the Convention has continuously evolved to respond to the needs and challenges typical of transboundary cooperation. Building on the successes achieved, the Parties to the Convention amended it in 2003 to open it up to non-UNECE countries, thereby making the Convention and its intergovernmental framework available to all regions of the world. With the likely entry into force of the amendment later in 2012, it is expected that the Convention will be greatly enhanced by this expansion and the sharing of experience and promotion of transboundary water cooperation at the global level.

From 3 to 4 September 2012 in Helsinki, Finland will host a twentieth anniversary seminar to celebrate the achievements under the Water Convention and to consider its future and what opportunities and challenges lie ahead. The event will be an important step in the preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (Rome, 28–30 November 2012), which will seek to build on the lessons from the past 20 years to shape the future work under the Convention. □

For further information please visit:  
<http://www.unece.org/env/water/>.

## Off the Press

## No one left behind: Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation

This publication, launched at the sixth World Water Forum in Marseille, France, shows that significant efforts still need to be made to ensure that access to water and to sanitation is safe and equitable for all members of the population, including in the pan-European region. Since the recognition of the human right to water and sanitation by the General Assembly of the United Nations and the Human Rights Council in 2010, ensuring access to water and sanitation for all is no longer simply an aspiration: it is now a legal obligation for Governments.

No one left behind aspires to provide guidance on how to ensure that all members of the population benefit from access to water and sanitation in an equitable manner, building upon the framework set out by the UNECE/WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO-Europe) Protocol on Water and Health to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. It highlights significant inequities in three main dimensions: geographical differences, discrimination or exclusion in access to services by vulnerable and marginalized groups, and affordability for users, along with concrete guidance and examples to help address them. □

The publication is available at:  
<http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html>.

