

PROGRESS REPORT

**for the contribution agreements No 21.0401/2012/636181/SUB/ENV.C3 and
21.0401/2013/666118/SUB/ENV.C3¹**

STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECE CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

Implementation periods

21.0401/2012/636181/SUB/ENV.C3 (signed in December 2012): January 2013 – May 2015
21.0401/2013/666118/SUB/ENV.C3 (signed in December 2013): January 2014- May 2015

1. Achievements vis-à-vis the objectives set under the agreement

The following objectives are outlined under the agreements:

- a) Raise the political profile of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA);
- b) Encourage ratification of the protocols, in particular the EMEP Protocol, the Protocol on Heavy Metals, the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol) among the countries of the region;
- c) Increase the cooperation and exchange of information through expanding emission inventories, the modelling and monitoring activities;
- d) Support the EECCA countries involvement in the activities of the Convention.

Raise the political profile of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

There were five missions organized by the secretariat in 2012-2013 to the countries in Central Asia to discuss with policy-makers the current state of ratification of the UNECE Conventions, in particular the CLRTAP, and the way forward. During the reporting period, there was a follow-up provided to the missions of the secretariat to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (November – December 2012), namely the finalization of the outcome documents of the meetings held with the national authorities and the preparation of the overall report for five missions. The outcome documents outlined the key points of discussions, needs and challenges in relation to the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its protocols and the agreed steps forward. Some elements of the agreed follow-up were included in the implementation plan for 2014-2015 related to the agreement No 21.0401/2013/666118/SUB/ENV.C3.

In September 2013 the secretariat joined the high-level UNECE mission to Turkmenistan, where it encouraged Turkmenistan to join the Convention in view of the health effects of air pollution during the meetings with the President, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with other high-level decision-makers, such as the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Agriculture, Water Resources and Nature Protection. Turkmenistan is one of the three countries in the EECCA region

¹ The progress report is issued for two contribution agreements given the commonality of the objectives and the similar goal for both projects. The project under agreement 21.0401/2013/666118/SUB/ENV.C3 covers the capacity-building activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, while the project under agreement 21.0401/2012/636181/SUB/ENV.C3 funds an extrabudgetary post at the secretariat to organize and to coordinate the implementation of these activities.

that are not yet Parties to the Convention. The feasibility of the ratification of the Convention is currently considered by the country.

On 20-21 November 2013 the workshop “Particulate matter: the impact on health and development of national emission inventories” was organized by UNECE in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It brought together over 40 representatives of national environment and public health authorities, technical experts and representatives of industrial sector of Uzbekistan to discuss the impact of particulate matter on health and the situation in Uzbekistan. In this context the secretariat stressed the importance of implementing the revised Gothenburg Protocol as a multilateral agreement including emission ceilings for fine particulate matter.

In November 2014 the secretariat participated in the meeting of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development composed by Environment Ministers of countries in Central Asia to inform the participants (civil society and international organizations were also present) about the effects of air pollution, the relevance of the problem for countries in Central Asia and the benefits of joining the Convention and its protocols and of using the tools they offer.

In November 2014 the secretariat participated in the final conference of the project Air Quality Governance in ENPI-East countries funded by the European Commission to inform its participants about the recent developments under the Convention and the capacity-building activities managed by ECE.

Throughout the reporting period the secretariat prepared and provided the Executive Body Bureau with the background information and documents to support its deliberations on the organization of an awareness-raising event for EECCA countries aimed at raising the political profile of the Convention.

In May 2015 UNECE started preparatory work to develop the content of the publication for decision-makers in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in order to promote action towards reducing emissions of harmful pollutants through the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its protocols and raise their awareness of the benefits of implementing the protocols, their key requirements and related success stories.

Encourage ratification of the protocols, in particular the EMEP Protocol, the Protocol on Heavy Metals, the Protocol on POPs, and the Gothenburg Protocol among the countries of the region

In 2013 UNECE continued to provide support to the tripartite project in Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation aimed at building capacity of the national experts in developing air pollutant emission inventories to encourage ratification of the key protocols. The secretariat ensured timely reporting to the donor and coordinated the closure of the project in August 2013. The secretariat also participated in the workshop organized within this project (St-Petersburg, March 2013) and delivered a presentation explaining the recent revision of the protocols and their new flexibility provisions.

UNECE encouraged the ratification and ensured timely response to Parties seeking advice on the provisions of the Protocol on EMEP and on the calculation of the amount of the mandatory contribution in case of ratification (Armenia, Republic of Moldova). Subsequently, Armenia acceded to the Protocol on EMEP in January 2014.

In accordance with the expressed need, the secretariat organized the analysis of the national air quality assessment and management policies and legislation in Uzbekistan identifying gaps with respect to the Convention’s requirements and providing recommendations on further steps towards ratification. The results of the analysis were presented at the roundtable organized by UNECE in Tashkent on 22 May 2015, where representatives of the Parliament, the State Committee for Nature Protection, the Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Agriculture, other authorities and representatives of industrial sector discussed its outcomes. It was decided to take the recommendations into consideration in connection with the on-going revision of the national law on air protection, in particular to reflect

there the key definitions and concepts adopted under the Convention. On the margins of the roundtable the State Committee for Nature Protection has indicated its intention to trigger the process of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on EMEP in 2015. That may take up to two years before the actual ratification.

The technical workshops aimed to improve emissions reporting in Uzbekistan (November 2013 and May 2015), Republic of Moldova (June 2014), Azerbaijan (November 2014) and Georgia (October 2014) mentioned in this report were used as opportunities to promote and to encourage the ratification of the Convention and its key protocols.

Increase the cooperation and exchange of information through expanding emission inventories, the modelling and monitoring activities

On 5-6 June 2014 a training on calculating gridded data and emission projections was held in the Republic of Moldova upon request by its Ministry of Environment. The training raised awareness of the participants of the reporting standards related to gridded data, the types and sources of information, tools and expertise necessary for gridding. In addition, the trainees became aware of the types of scenarios, data sources, and the use of GAINS model.

There were two workshops on emission inventories organized in Uzbekistan: the first one in November 2013 provided a general overview of the inventory system, the key approaches and requirements and compared the current system in Uzbekistan with international practice, whereas the second one (19-21 May 2015) was focusing on the practical work with national data within the sectors of energy and agriculture. The workshop participants developed recommendations on further steps to harmonize the national inventory system with the Convention's requirements. Working with national data sets, experts calculated ammonia emissions from agriculture for the first time. It was concluded that available national data is sufficient for developing good-quality and accurate emission inventories.

On 21-23 October 2014 a workshop on emission inventories development was held in Georgia. It raised awareness of national experts on general issues (reporting obligations, elements and legal framework for the national inventory system, etc.) and improved their skills in drafting the Informative Inventory Report (IIR), analysing the key categories, gridding data with particular focus on 'Industrial Processes' sector. As a result, Georgia submitted the inventory tables in the 2015 reporting round with data recalculated in accordance with the guidance, as well as the IIR and information on large point sources.

On 11-13 November 2014 a similar workshop was held in Azerbaijan. Both workshops, as well as the second workshop in Uzbekistan were facilitated by experts from the EMEP Centre on Emission Inventories and Projections hosted by Environment Agency Austria. In Azerbaijan, in accordance with the need expressed by the Government, the practical sessions were focused on the energy sector. As a result of the workshop, Azerbaijan submitted for the first time its IIR and NFR tables in the 2015 reporting round, including the information on large-point sources, and thus became eligible for the inventory in-depth review in 2015.

Support the EECCA countries involvement in the activities of the Convention

Besides providing administrative support to the nominated delegates from the EECCA region to participate in the regular sessions of the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies (the Working Group on Strategies and Review, the Working Group on Effects and the EMEP Steering Body), the secretariat organized a session on the challenges faced by these countries in implementing and ratifying the Convention and its protocols during the meeting of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (WGSR) in 2013 and a session on progress made and remaining problems in the EECCA region during the meeting of the Working Group in 2014. As a result of these sessions, the list of obstacles hindering the countries from further progress has been identified together with the list of

needs requiring expert, financial or in-kind support and further steps to be undertaken. The secretariat also liaised with WGSR participants from EECCA countries and encouraged them to deliver presentations at its session “Transport and Air Pollution” in July 2014 focusing in particular on the challenges they face in the transport sector and providing information on some steps they are already taking to address these. Within the WGSR session in 2014 the following countries shared information either by making a presentation and/or by submitting a completed template with examples and good practices of air pollution-related policies, strategies and measures: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Throughout the whole reporting period the participation of representatives of EECCA countries in the regular meetings under the Convention was encouraged and supported by the secretariat. In general, the participation of delegates from EECCA countries, in particular from Central Asia, in the regular meetings under the Convention has increased during 2013-2015. The travel of nominated experts from EECCA countries to participate in the meeting of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections (11-12 May 2015, Milan, Italy) was initiated, administratively processed and covered by the secretariat. The travel support to the participant from Uzbekistan was provided within tight deadlines on ad-hoc basis to attend the Workshop to promote the ratification of the CLRTAP protocols organized by the Task Force on Heavy Metals in Oslo (4-5 March 2014) given that the organizers did not have sufficient funds to cover her participation. In addition, the secretariat provided administrative support to organize the meeting of the Coordinating Group for EECCA countries in Geneva in December 2014.

In order to improve the access to information in Russian language, the secretariat was updating the Russian version of the Convention’s website throughout the whole reporting period. Besides that, some documents have been translated to Russian by the secretariat in order to facilitate submission of information by Parties in the EECCA region (e.g. the template for reporting on good practices to WGSR, the preliminary call for data by CCE on critical loads and biodiversity indicators, some in-session documents of the Executive Body, etc.).

The secretariat also provided an input to the assessment report of the Convention concerning capacity-building activities in the EECCA region.

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Thus, the project has already brought significant impact in terms of:

- 1) Improved emission data reporting under the Convention by countries in the EECCA region: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova. For example, by submitting in the 2015 reporting round its NFR tables and IIR for the first time, Azerbaijan became eligible for a Stage-3 review of its inventory in June 2015.**
- 2) Improved exchange of information and participation of delegates and experts from EECCA countries in the meetings and activities under the Convention, including exchange of information on challenges and progress in implementation, good practices of air pollution-related policies, strategies and measures at the WGSR sessions (10 EECCA countries presented at the last WGSR session) and participation in the meetings of task forces.**
- 3) Increased awareness of decision-makers in Central Asia of the effects of air pollution and benefits of joining the Convention and its protocols;**
- 4) Progress towards ratification: the ratification of the Protocol on EMEP by Armenia in 2014. The feasibility to accede to the Convention is currently considered by Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is intending to trigger the process of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on EMEP in 2015 – the whole process of internal coordination, consideration and approval might take up to two years. Uzbekistan will take into consideration the results of the national legislation analysis conducted within this project in view of the on-going revision of the national Law on air**

protection, as well as the recommendations made on the steps towards the ratification of the key protocols to the Convention. At the fifty-second session of the WGSR the Republic of Moldova and Georgia indicated their intention to ratify the key protocols by the end of 2019.

2. State of play in the implementation of the agreement, highlights, identification of critical issues and obstacles at the current stage

- The resources provided under agreement No 21.0401/2012/636181/SUB/ENV.C3 (staff costs) are going to be fully exhausted by the end of 2015, while the project activities under the agreement No 21.0401/2013/666118/SUB/ENV.C3 are planned for implementation until 2017.
- The secretariat is following the implementation plan for 2014-2015 compiled in accordance with the workplan of the Convention for the same biennium and with the needs expressed by Ministers of Environment of the countries in EECCA region. The plan was presented to the informal advisory group consisting of the Parties providing their contributions, including EU, and the recipient countries (represented by the Chair of the Coordinating Group for EECCA). However, the implementation of selected activities has been postponed due to circumstances beyond the secretariat's control, e.g. the lack of timely confirmation by the Cabinet of Ministers in Uzbekistan, the dissolution of the Ministry of Environment in Kazakhstan. The reshuffle in the Government in Moldova in late 2014 and the dissolution of the Ministry in Kazakhstan hindered the process of consideration of the accession of these Convention Parties to the EMEP Protocol.

3. Further next steps in the planning and implementation

UNECE is going to finalize the implementation of the following activities in 2015, as planned:

- organization of workshops to support the emissions reporting and inventory development in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine;
- finalization and printing the publication for decision-makers in English and Russian;
- participation in relevant meetings to raise awareness about the benefits of the implementation of the Convention and its protocols among the target countries;
- support to the participation of experts from EECCA countries in the meetings of Task Forces and Groups aimed at building their capacity and/or information exchange;
- update of the Russian version of the CLRTAP web-pages due to migration of the new UNECE website.

The capacity-building activities planned for 2016-2017² include a second round of consultation and trainings focused on calculating base year emission levels, emission reduction targets, as provided for by the amended Gothenburg Protocol, and making respective projections. The activities will also include the analysis of national legislation, if requested, and recommendations on further steps to ratification. The Convention secretariat will continue its awareness-raising efforts; in particular, it will use the opportunity of the 8th Environment for Europe Conference to be held in Batumi, Georgia in June 2016 to highlight the results of the current capacity-building efforts and to promote the Convention among high-level decision-makers from the region, as well as to work towards strengthening commitment towards ratification of protocols by these countries.

UNECE will continue supporting the EECCA countries' involvement in the activities within the Convention and will remain in continuous contact with the recipient countries with regard to their needs in order to be able to shape the implementation plan for 2016-2017 accordingly, in consultation with the Parties providing their contributions, including the European Union.

² Subject to further availability of the necessary staff resources