

The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes



Survey for reporting on promoting the “Environment for Europe” process and the outcomes of its ministerial conferences*

I. Introduction

1. At its eighteenth session in April 2012 the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) invited the secretariat to organize consultations (in the form of a survey) with UNECE member States to collect information on how countries have been promoting objectives and priorities of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process and strengthening implementation of outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.
2. The secretariat will prepare a summary report on the basis of responses received to the survey. The report will support the discussion during the EfE mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes which is being organized during the nineteenth session of CEP (Geneva, 22–25 October 2013).
3. The survey, contained in section V of the current document, was developed by the secretariat in consultation with the CEP Bureau. In addition, an overview of main achievements of the EfE process is provided in section II. Section III focusses on outcomes of Astana Ministerial Conference, and section IV includes background information on the mid-term review of relevance to the survey. For convenience, the Reform Plan of the EfE process is provided in the annex to this document.

II. Overview of the “Environment for Europe” process: main achievements

4. Since its launch in 1991 the EfE process supports countries efforts to advance in environmental governance. The EfE process is a unique partnership of member States within the UNECE region, organizations of the United Nations System represented in the region, other intergovernmental organizations and bodies, Regional Environmental Centres, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other major groups. UNECE, which has been closely associated with the EfE process since its inception, serves as its secretariat.

* This document has not been formally edited.

5. The process and its ministerial conferences provide an effective high-level platform for stakeholders to discuss, decide and join efforts in addressing environmental priorities across the 56 countries of the UNECE region, and is a regional pillar of sustainable development.
6. At the same time, the process focuses on supporting the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and of South-Eastern Europe in their efforts to raise environmental standards and comply with international commitments.
7. The EfE process provided the framework for the development of governance policies and initiatives, legal instruments, policies and practical actions and tools that promote and improve environmental governance and strengthen sustainable development at the regional level, as well as contribute to enhancing the global sustainability. The main achievements of the EfE process include:
 - (a) Four assessments on the state of the environment in the pan-European region (Dobris, Aarhus, Kyiv and Belgrade assessments) and an assessment of environmental assessments (Astana).
 - (b) Setting up institutional mechanisms for cooperation (establishing the Environmental Action Programme Task Force, the Project Preparation Committee and the Regional Environmental Centres).
 - (c) Acting as a driving force for developing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other environmental policy instruments, and promoting their implementation.¹
 - (d) Launching the UNECE Environmental Performance Review Programme for member countries that are non-OECD members.
 - (e) Promoting cross-sectoral activities and policy integration (energy efficiency, education for sustainable development (ESD) and greening the economy).
 - (f) Enhancing cooperation between Governments and civil society organizations.
8. Following a decision by Ministers in Belgrade in 2007, CEP reformed the EfE process in 2009 to ensure that it remains relevant and valuable, and to strengthen its effectiveness.

III. Main features of and lessons learned from the Astana Ministerial Conference

9. The seventh EfE Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011) was the first EfE Conference organized in accordance with the Reform Plan of the EfE process. The Astana Ministerial Conference gathered more than 1,500 participants from Governments, the international community, civil society, business and the media throughout the UNECE region to discuss two main themes: sustainable management of water and water-related

¹ The UNECE Programme on Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs); the UNECE Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment; the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS); the Aarhus Convention; the Protocols on Heavy Metals and Persistent Organic Pollutants to the Air Pollution Convention; the Pan-European Strategy to Phase-out Leaded Petrol; the UNECE Strategy for ESD; the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention; the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention; the Protocol on Civil Liability to the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions; the Environment Strategy for Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries; the Carpathian Convention; and a series of guidelines and recommendations to Governments.

ecosystems; and greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development.

10. The event was organized in an interactive format, including nine high-level multi-stakeholder round tables. To support multi-stakeholder discussions during the Conference and to facilitate decision-making, substantive documents on each of the two main themes were prepared by UNECE jointly with EfE partners. For the first time, the EfE Ministerial Conference was a paper-smart event.

11. The EfE partners organized 43 side events on issues related to the two main themes of the Conference. The Conference gathered business and industry representatives, who also participated in a Green Innovations, Technologies and Ecoservices Fair, organized on the margins of the Conference. Representatives of media attended the Conference, preceded by a capacity-building workshop for journalists.

12. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Astana Ministerial Declaration — a concise and comprehensive document — in which ministers confirmed their commitment to improving environmental protection and promoting sustainable development in the UNECE region through the EfE process, as well as decided on a number of follow up and further actions under the two themes of the Conference.

13. At its eighteenth session in April 2012, CEP assessed the effectiveness of the Astana Ministerial Conference. Delegations highly appreciated the organization and the outcomes of the Conference, structured in a new format according to the EfE Reform Plan. The success of the Conference was attributed to its two main themes, which were of importance for the entire region, its interactive format and its good outcomes, as well as its efficient preparatory process².

14. Meeting participants observed that the Astana Conference had demonstrated once again that the EfE process provided a unique high-level platform for addressing environmental concerns across the region and should be continued. Delegations expressed the wish for the future EfE conferences to be prepared in the same manner, including an even higher interactivity during the conference.

15. At the same time, some delegations observed that the biggest challenge for future conferences was to provide new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, given the ongoing economic crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region.

16. Future conferences should also be better streamlined, in particular in terms of side events. Concerning identification of themes for the next conferences, delegates stressed the need to find the right balance between established and emerging themes, including enhancing the work related to green economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development.

IV. The “Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana Conference main outcomes

17. In accordance with the EfE Reform Plan and following a decision by the Astana Ministerial Conference, CEP is convening a mid-term review in 2013 to assess the progress in implementation of the Conference’s main outcomes. The mid-term review would provide

² The preparatory process for the Astana Ministerial Conference commenced in 2009 and included four meetings of CEP (October 2009, November 2010, May and September 2011), two meetings of CEP Extended Bureau (May 2009 and March 2010), and one joint meeting of the Bureaux of CEP and of the Water Convention (January 2010).

renewed impetus to the process and its findings would be taken into account in the preparatory process for the next conference.

18. The EfE Reform Plan stipulates that particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

19. Furthermore, the Reform Plan stipulates that active participation by and input of all interested UNECE countries, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process. Also, countries taking the lead for one or more issues were encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process’ objectives and priorities.

20. The Astana Conference main outcomes include: (a) ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); (b) implementing the Astana Water Action; (c) promoting a green economy in the region and the Green Bridge Partnership Programme; (d) conducting a third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs); (e) establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS); and (f) continuing the work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force) and strengthening the work of the Regional Environmental Centres (see ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1).³

V. Survey

21. The purpose of the survey is to collect information (in accordance with the request by CEP) from the UNECE member States about the promotion of the EfE objectives and priorities in general, as well as strengthening implementation of the outcomes of the Astana Ministerial Conference in particular, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.

22. Following to the EfE Reform Plan, which stipulates in paragraph 16 that “member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process”, the survey aims at assessing the progress made by countries in implementing the EfE objectives and priorities as set out in the 2009 EfE Reform Plan (paragraphs 6 and 7). The EfE priorities adopted in 2009 cover most of activities carried out at present by the UNECE Environment subprogramme, as well as a number of activities carried out by the EfE partners. These activities are included in sections 2 and 3 of the survey.

23. In addition, following up on paragraph 16 of the EfE Reform Plan stipulating that “member States should strengthen the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences”, the survey aims at assessing the progress in implementation of the main outcome activities of the 2011 Astana EfE Ministerial Conference (refer to paragraph 20 of the present document). These activities are included in section 4 of the survey.

24. Furthermore, the survey seeks to identify country views on environmental priorities and themes that could be addressed at the next ministerial conference, as well as on possible efficient interactive modes for conducting discussions at ministerial level. These issues are included in sections 5 and 6 of the survey.

³ The Astana Ministerial Declaration and other Conference documents are available on the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/efe/astana/welcome.html>).

25. It is recognized that countries may engage in a particular issue, treaty or process without the direct attribution of that engagement to the EfE process. Therefore it is recommended that the responses to the survey questions also explain the extent to which the EfE process has influenced the attention and priority given to an issue, process or treaty. If the response to a question is “not applicable”, “disagree” or “not foreseen”, but the particular issue is nonetheless important for the country, it could be explained that the issue is addressed primarily through means other than the EfE process or UNECE activities.

26. The target group of the survey comprises the representatives of national Governments of the UNECE region.

27. The structure of the survey has been developed to be user-friendly, mostly using a “tick box” approach, which is complemented by an explanatory section to allow respondents to elaborate on their choice. Such an approach is expected to facilitate the process of filling in the survey.

28. On the basis of responses received the UNECE secretariat will prepare an analysis for consideration by the nineteenth session of CEP. The analysis along with the responses received from countries will be posted on the CEP website.

29. UNECE member States are invited to complete the survey below and submit it to the secretariat (efe@unece.org) **by Friday, 28 June 2013**, at the latest.

1. Contact information

Please indicate the name, title, organization and country, as well as the contact data of the person who filled in the survey

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2. Progress in promoting the objectives of the “Environment for Europe” process

In the table below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate. The boxes can be ticked by double-clicking on the box and choosing “checked” under the “default value” from the popping up window. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The EfE process continues to serve as a mechanism to:

(a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer. The process was and is of particular importance for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, because it covers the whole European region and provides possibilities for enhancing environmental issues which are not dealt with in other fora. For EU countries and to some extent also for South-East Europe there are a variety of other fora or instruments which support environmental policies and implementation.

(b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer. The process was and is of particular importance for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, because it covers the whole European region and provides possibilities for enhancing environmental issues which are not dealt with in other fora. For EU countries and to some extent also for South-East Europe there are a variety of other fora or instruments which support environmental policies and implementation.

(c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer. The process was and is of particular importance for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, because it covers the whole European region and provides possibilities for enhancing environmental issues which are not dealt with in other fora. For EU countries and to some extent also for South-East Europe there are a variety of other fora or instruments which support environmental policies and implementation.

(d) Encourage the participation of civil society

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer. The process was and is of particular importance for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, because it covers the whole European region and provides possibilities for enhancing environmental issues which are not dealt with in other fora. For EU countries and to some extent also for South-East Europe there are a variety of other fora or instruments which support environmental policies and implementation. The participation and cooperation with civil society has a long tradition in Western European Countries. For the other sub-regions, this is still a new field and in this regard the UNECE and the EfE-process can be very helpful.

(e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

The questions under this heading are difficult to answer. The process was and is of particular importance for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, because it covers the whole European region and provides possibilities for enhancing environmental issues which are not dealt with in other fora. For EU countries and to some extent also for South-East Europe there are a variety of other fora or instruments which support environmental policies and implementation.

3. Progress in promoting the political priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in promoting the EfE political priorities, based on commitments already made under the EfE process, including through national policies and relevant partnerships. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The progress (in your country) on EfE political priorities may include:

(a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments (by your country)

– improvement of environmental governance:

not started / initiated / in progress / accomplished / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Austria is a federal republic made up of nine states (Länder). Government responsibilities of Austria are shared by three levels of territorial authority, the federation (Bund), the Länder and the 2 358 municipalities. The parliament has two houses, the Nationalrat and the Bundesrat. While members of the Nationalrat are elected by the entire population every four years, the members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the parliaments of the Länder. The Bundesrat’s vote can be overridden by simple majority of the Nationalrat, except in a few cases that require both houses’ approval. Each Land has an elected legislature and a state government.

Since 2000, the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW, less formally known as the Lebensministerium or Ministry of Life), has been the main federal body responsible for environmental issues.

Many Austrians are members of environmental non-government organisations (NGOs) or alpine associations, indicating a strong interest in environmental policy. In keeping with this, Austria has often been at the forefront of environmental developments in the European Union and internationally.

– strengthening environmental institutions:

not started / initiated / in progress / accomplished / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Austria has well-established environmental organizations and institutions. There is no need for further strengthening of environmental institutions. In addition we support measures with focus on the Balkans

– implementation of policy instruments:

not started / initiated / in progress / accomplished / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

During the 2000s, the demand for environmental quality was also reflected in the adoption of two strategies for sustainable development.

Because of a well established Environmental legislation, Austrian environmental infringements are below the EU average.

Austria is one of the few countries that have an integrated approach to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and permitting.

A variety of mechanisms are in place to assess, ex ante, environmental and other policies, including strategic

<p>environmental assessment and regulatory impact assessment.</p>	
<p>(b) Streamlining the implementation by your Government of commitments made to existing UNECE legally-binding and legally non-binding instruments</p> <p>Overall assessment: <input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>	
<p>Air Pollution Convention and its Protocols</p>	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>1979 Convention: Ratification 16.12.1982; 1984 EMEP Protocol: Accession 04.06.1987; 1985 Sulphur Protocol: Ratification 04.06.1987; 1988 NOx Protocol: Ratification 15.01.1990; 1991 VOC Protocol: Ratification 23.08.1994; 1994 Sulphur Protocol: Ratification 27.08.1998; 1998 Heavy Metals Protocol: 17.12.2003; 1998 POPs Protocol: 27.08.2002.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Requirements of the Protocols fulfilled by mandatory environmental standards, licensing procedures, economic instruments etc.</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Annual reporting of inventory information; policy reporting according to decisions of the Executive Body.</p>
<p>Water Convention</p>	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The UN-ECE Water Convention is the key basis for our work in the three international River Commissions we are sharing (Danube, Rhine and Elbe) as well as for our bilateral trans-boundary water commissions.</p> <p>– Implementation</p>

“Environment for Europe” mid-term review of the Astana main outcomes: survey

	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Protocol on Water and Health</p>	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>A broad set of national legislation as well as implemented legislation on EU level is in place to protect all freshwaters in Austria. Furthermore inter-ministerial cooperation in the field of water and health is well established in Austria. Against this background no ratification is foreseen for the time being.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Industrial Accidents Convention</p>	<p>– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria ratified the Helsinki Convention on 4 August 1999.</p> <p>– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Transposition into Austria law by the acts Federal Law Gaz. I No. 88/2000 and No. 90/2000. See also: http://www.lebensministerium.at/umwelt/betriebl_umweltschutz_uvp/umweltschutz-anlagen/Seveso_HelsinkiKonv.html</p> <p>– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
<p>Protocol on Civil Liability</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Espoo Convention</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria ratified the Espoo Convention on 27 July 1994.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Implementation in the Austrian EIA Act 2000 (Federal Law Gazette I No. 697/1993 as amended, last amendment by Federal Law Gazette I No. 95/2013), in particular section 10.</p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The reporting is based on the decisions in the context of the Espoo Convention.</p>
<p>Protocol on SEA</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Protocol was ratified on 23 March 2010.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Implementation in several existing Acts or into newly established Acts both at federal and provincial level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The reporting is based on the decisions in the context of the SEA Protocol.</p>
Aarhus Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>) <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
Protocol on PRTRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>) <p><input type="checkbox"/> signed / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ratified/acceded/approved / <input type="checkbox"/> in the process of ratification/accession/approval / <input type="checkbox"/> not foreseen / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria ratified the PRTR Protocol on 23 March 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Austrian Environmental Information Act was amended in 2009 by Federal Law Gazette I No. 128/2009. It includes provisions for the National PRTR (§ 9a; www.prtr.at) and on the protection of whistle-blowers (§ 9b).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formal reporting (national implementation reports) <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

	<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The first NIR will be due in December 2013.</p>
<p>Strategy for ESD</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> adopted / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> actively participating / <input type="checkbox"/> not engaged / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Austrian Strategy for ESD was adopted by the government in 2008; Austria is actively involved in the UNECE steering committee. See http://www.umweltbildung.at/cgi-bin/dekadenbuero/af.pl?contentid=12003</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Regular (annual) reports to the UNECE Steering committee, Good Practises in ESD, published by UNECE; see website http://www.unece.org/env/esd/</p> <p align="center">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Regular reports to the UNECE Steering committee, reporting to UNECE-ESD Indicators Review in 2006/07 and 2010, review in 2014 is envisioned.</p>
<p>THE PEP</p>	<p align="center">– Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> adopted / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> actively participating / <input type="checkbox"/> not engaged / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>+ National Task Force Meetings and national coordination with Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Infrastructure and of their contributions</p> <p>+ Financial contributions to THE PEP in the years 2008 – 2012 to the amount of € 238.000,--.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>+ „klima:aktiv mobil“, the Austrian Action Programme for environmentally-friendly mobility launched by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, is motivating and supporting cities, municipalities and regions, companies, tourism, schools and others to implement projects for reducing their transport related GHG and is stimulating the economy and green jobs by supporting investments in green technologies, environmentally friendly mobility services and infrastructure. More</p>

	<p>than 4.000 klima:aktiv mobil project partners saving 540.000 to CO₂/year with a national overall budget by the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of about € 10 million/ year.</p> <p>+ National implementation of THE PEP Tool Heat (Health Economic Assessment Tool) for Cycling; Calculating the health benefits of implementing the Masterplan Cycling in Austria; Translation and dissemination of HEAT to cities and regions, stakeholders, planners and experts</p> <p>+ National implementation of THE PEP HEAT for Walking, including Materplan Walking (in conception)</p> <p>+ Application HEAT for Companies</p> <p>+ Contribution to THE PEP Partnership on jobs in green and healthy transport: by the klima:aktiv mobil programme</p> <p>+ Contribution to THE PEP Partnership on eco-driving: Eco-driving practical tests by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management in the frame of the Conference Sustainable Development of Urban Transport, 7-8 June 2012, Moscow, Follow up on 5 march 2013 International Symposium “How to ensure sustainable functioning of transport systems”, Moscow – agreement on possible cooperation in the field of Eco-Driving between Austria and Russian Federation; Contribution to THE PEP WS “Green and healthy-friendly sustainably mobility: focus on urban Central Asia” with a focus on eco-driving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reporting (responding to THE PEP survey on progress in the attainment of the Amsterdam Goals) <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management submits in coordination with the Austrian Ministry of Health and the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Infrastructure the contributions to the yearly surveys of progress in the attainment of the Amsterdam Goals.</p>
<p>(c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Extensive monitoring networks are in place and well established in Austria.</p>	
<p>Production of indicator-based state-of-the-environment reports</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> never produced / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> producing occasionally / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> producing regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria has a well-developed system of environmental and sustainable development indicators, and has undertaken a series of initiatives to measure well-being. Austria has adopted a relatively open approach on information for the public and generally responds</p>

	<p>positively to requests for information,</p> <p>One example: Results of monitoring and assessments on water quality and quantity both for surface waters and groundwater are published on an annual basis.</p>
Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria has a well established Monitoring system and Austrian legislation provides for a wide range of responses to non-compliance. Violations of environmental permits most often result in orders requiring the permit holder to restore lawful conditions within a determined time.</p>
<p>(d) Ensuring implementation of the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) Programme</p> <p>Overall assessment of your country’s role:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not active / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> active as donor / <input type="checkbox"/> active as reviewed country / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>In addition active as a reviewing country – currently in the case of Croatia.</p>	
Participation in the EPR process as a reviewed country in the future	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
Participation in the EPR process as a donor country (in-kind and/or providing financial support)	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> on-going / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria provides financial support for the EPR and participated as a reviewing country in performance reviews.</p>
Implementation of EPR recommendations by the reviewed country	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>(e) Raising public awareness on environmental issues</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Public participation in decision making has been strongly influenced by Austria’s unique “social partnership”, which provides privileged access to formally recognised interest groups of enterprises, employees, and farmers. Although not part of this social partnership, active and relatively well-resourced environmental NGOs have contributed positively to decision-making processes, in some cases on the basis of explicit legal provisions. All the Länder have established environmental ombudsmen. They are independent of the government and uphold the interests of</p>	

<p>environmental protection on behalf of the local population.</p> <p>Raising public awareness is also well-implemented in the water sector and air sector (measuring stations for air quality).. The public is regularly informed about activities in the water sector by press releases and via the Ministries’ Website. A special focus is laid on informing and involving young people, see e.g. www.generationblue.at and the many initiatives provided on this platform;</p>	
<p>Ensuring public access to environmental information</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>See above</p>
<p>Ensuring public participation in environmental-decision making</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>See above</p> <p>One example: The national river basin management plan is the main instrument in the water sector. Public participation in all decisive phases is ensured, stakeholders are taken on board when important water management decisions are taken.</p>
<p>Ensuring public access to environmental justice</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>See above</p>
<p>(f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness</p> <p>Overall assessment in your country:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The Austrian population appears to be more satisfied with environmental quality than the European population on average. The burden of disease attributable to the environment is among the lowest in the European region. We have undertaken a series of initiatives to measure well-being. There is evidence that school education is a significant source of environmental knowledge. This is related to a long-standing policy of promoting environmental education, particularly through the network of “eco-schools”.</p>	
<p>Mainstreaming the environment into economic development</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
<p>Implementing environmental policies through economic/market instruments (e.g.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>While regulations, standards and environmentally motivated subsidies remain at the core of Austrian environmental policy mix, the use of economic instruments has been extended and this has helped improve pricing of environmental externalities. Austria is scrutinizing several</p>

<p>phasing out subsidies, introducing environmental taxation, payment for ecosystems services, etc.)</p>	<p>areas of taxation constantly with an focus on possible improvements, especially environment-related taxation.</p> <p>The Austrian Mineral Oil Tax was amended several times in the last year, always leading to an increase of the tax burden. The “engine-related insurance tax” is levied on the power of the combustion engine (measured in kilowatt). The same is true for the vehicle tax levied on vehicles with less than 3,5 tons permissible maximum weight.</p> <p>The Austrian Government is trying to reduce the tax burden on labour. The latest attempt in this respect was the amendment of the commuting allowance as from 2013. This measure enclosed a tax-bonus for public transport expenses born by the employer.</p>
<p>Implementing environmental policies through regulatory/normative instruments (e.g. norms, standards, bans, etc.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Austria relies heavily on regulatory instruments and standards. These are accompanied by a number of financial assistance programmes and voluntary instruments. This brought us to the top of the successful countries in terms of environmental protection</p>
<p>Implementing environmental policies through information based/voluntary instruments (e.g. labelling, etc.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>At both federal and Land level, co-operation between government and social partners is a voluntary and informal arrangement not regulated by law, although a number of Austrian laws specify that certain stakeholders or institutions have a right to participate in the consultation process.</p> <p>Demand-side instruments, including standards, labelling and green public procurement, are playing an increasing role.</p> <p>The policy mix for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use is mainly based on regulation, voluntary instruments and subsidies. The latter include a series of agri-environmental programmes, the latest adopted in 2007, to provide financial support to more environment-friendly agricultural practices, such as organic farming, thereby reducing the impacts of agriculture on biodiversity, land and water.</p>

4. Progress in strengthening the implementation of outcomes of the Astana Efe Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please, provide a brief summary of how your country is progressing in implementing the commitments made at the Astana Conference. Please tick the box that best corresponds to the current situation or level of implementation in your country. Provide an explanation, as appropriate. N/A means not applicable. If you choose N/A, nevertheless please elaborate on your choice.

The main outcomes of the Astana Conference include:

(a) Ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (by your country)

Please provide additional information, as relevant, that was not provided under section 3(b) (up to 250 words):

...

(b) Implementing the Astana Water Action (by your country)

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

See also the Austrian answer to the questionnaire on the main outcomes of the Astana Water Action, which was an input for the EfE mid-term review (slightly shortened):

Action 1 (Urban wastewater treatment and drinking water supply):

Austria has put considerable efforts in increasing connection rates to public water supply and wastewater treatment networks. Since 1959 about 55 billion Euros were spent in building water and sanitation infrastructure until end of 2011. These efforts resulted in connections rates of more than 90% to public water supply systems and of about 94% to public sewer systems with adequate advanced wastewater treatment and full compliance with EU legal requirements according to urban wastewater treatment.

Action 2 (Improvement of river continuity and habitat connectivity):

In line with requirements of the EU-WFD (2000/60/EC), the First River Basin Management Plan (NGP 2009) identifies a number of important surface water bodies, where measures to restore river continuity as well as to provide environmental flows have to be implemented with highest priority - latest by 2015. In total 140 Mio. Euros have been made available for the period 2009-2015 for the implementation of related measures to restore and improve ecological status of surface water bodies. Since 2009 more than 40 Mio. Euros were spent for restoration of river continuity with federal contributions (subsidies) of about 20 Mio Euros. Additionally, more than 55 Mio Euros were spent for restoration of river morphology with federal contributions of about 24 Mio Euros.

Ad Action 3 (Enhancement of renewable energy production, refurbishment of hydropower plants):

The refurbishment of existing hydropower plants to improve its efficiency with simultaneous compliance with ecological requirements (e.g. river continuity, environmental flows) is supported by financial incentives as well as by providing advice to owners of small hydropower plants (e.g. Upper Austria, where until 2011 the technical upgrade and ecological restoration of 243 small existing hydropower plants was finished using 4,8 Mio Euro funds and 37,2 Mio Euro investments.). For further development of hydropower generation, an Austrian Water Catalogue was launched in 2012, which allows a transparent and reliable evaluation of new hydropower projects in order to balance the potential for hydropower generation with ecological value of surface water bodies (see http://www.lebensministerium.at/wasser/wasser-oesterreich/wasserrecht_national/planung/erneuerbareenergie/Kriterienkatalog.html).

(c) Promoting a green economy (by your country)

...

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Austria has launched several initiatives related to green growth.

In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW) launched the Masterplan Green Jobs, aimed at creating 100 000 additional green jobs by 2020. It is linked to other initiatives that support Austrian environmental technology and the environmental goods and services sector.

In 2008, the BMLFUW, in co-operation with other government agencies and think tanks, launched Growth in

Transition, a platform to strengthen dialogue about sustainable growth. It is intended to promote “qualitative growth” (increased well-being and quality of life) rather than GDP growth.

Promoting the Green Bridge Partnership Programme *(by your country)*

not started / initiated / in progress / well-implemented/ not foreseen

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

(d) Ensuring implementation of the third cycle of environmental performance reviews (EPRs) *(by your country)*

not foreseen / active as donor / active as reviewed country / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

(e) Establishing a regular process of environmental assessment (RPEA), including developing a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) *(by your country)*

not started / initiated / in progress / SEIS developed / RPEA established

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

(f) Participation in the continued work of the Environmental Action Programme Task Force (EAP Task Force), including on the sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems, and on greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development *(by your country)*

not foreseen / active as donor / active as beneficiary / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

Participation in strengthening the contribution of Regional Environmental Centres (RECs) in both promoting green economy and better environmental governance at the local, national, subregional and regional levels *(by your country)*

not foreseen / active as donor / active as beneficiary / N/A

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

We have close cooperation with REC-Szentendre.

5. Thematic priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process for the Eighth Ministerial Conference

In the table below, please indicate thematic priorities that might be addressed at the Eighth Efe Ministerial Conference, including a brief justification note for each proposed priorities. Please also indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the proposed several themes, as well as organising a high-level segment on MEAs and the proposed

theme. Please kindly note that the idea to organize a high-level segment on MEAs emerged from the discussion at the informal meeting of representatives of governing bodies of MEAs and CEP (Geneva, 27 February 2013).

First thematic priority (an “established” theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addressed the “established” theme sustainable management of water and water related ecosystems)

Please propose a theme: Sustainable use of hydro power

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

A potential future key issue is the Water-Food-Energy Nexus. Part of this key issue and one of the recent key issues in the Danube region as well as in the Alpine region is to reconcile hydro power generation and water ecology. Guidelines have been adopted and recommended for application by the contracting parties of the ICPDR as well as of the Alpine Convention.

Second thematic priority (an “emerging” theme of importance to the entire region, e.g. the Astana Conference addresses the “emerging” theme greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development)

Please propose a theme: ...

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

General Note: All of the following responses should be seen from the perspective of the needs of the EECCA-countries.

<p>Enhancing the work on greening the economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Astana EfE and Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>Green economy could be an overarching goal for both western countries and EECCA-Countries in making future development more sustainable. While the concern of the industrialized economies is how to reduce environmental risks and keep the economy green, the concern of the less developed economies is how growth can be promoted without degrading the natural resource base and with respect for the principles of a sustainable economy.</p>
<p>Promoting a sustainable consumption and production</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>This topic is especially beneficial for less developed countries as it provides an opportunity for “leapfrogging” to more resource-efficient, environmentally sound and competitive technologies, allowing them to bypass inefficient and polluting phases of development.</p>

<p>“Greening” International Financial Institutions (IFIs) policies</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Rio+20 Conferences commitments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>The international financial institutions (IFIs) will play a key role in financing the new sustainable development agenda. Yet at the same time, the IFIs face constraints that limit their ability to promote sustainable development. This topic could identify some of the challenges in order to help IFIs begin to support the implementation of green economy</p>
<p>Resilience and Change</p>	<p>A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to encompass the need for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness and contingency planning to be ready for both environmental and demographic change in the coming years, i.e., the expected increase in extreme weather events due to global warming, but also to the foreseen changes in demographics (aging populations and south-north migration), in particular in urban areas)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>
<p>Organizing a high-level segment on assessing the progress in establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and developing the SEIS across the region</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
<p>Organizing a high-level segment on UNECE MEAs</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
<p>Role of public participation in effective implementation of MEAs</p>	<p>A possible theme for a possible high-level segment on UNECE MEAs (of relevance to all UNECE MEAs)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Need to develop new structures or frameworks to address emerging themes, such as green economy, giving the on-going crisis that affected all countries in the UNECE region</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p>	

<p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>A new structure could help EECCA-Countries and the Balkans to address emerging themes like green economy etc.</p>	
<p>Greening the economies</p>	<p>Elaboration of subregional roadmaps (e.g. EU, SEE, Central Asia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>A new Roadmap could help ECCA-Countries and the Balkans to address emerging themes like green economy etc.</p> <p>Elaboration/harmonization of regional eco-standards for products and production processes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Other (<i>please suggest demand-driven frameworks/structures</i>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Strengthening implementation of ESD</p>	<p>Mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational training to meet future labour market demand</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Mainstreaming ESD into teachers/educators’ training</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Implementing an ESD school plan in every school (i.e. addressing campus management, curricula and community interaction)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Strengthening environmental considerations in other social and economic sectors</p>	<p>Sustainable urban development (e.g. bringing together the relevant activities under THE PEP, Environment and Health process, and green building)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p>

	...
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6. Format of the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference

*In the table below, please, indicate/propose an interactive format for the next Conference.
Provide an explanation, as appropriate.*

<p>Interactive format for the Conference (for a more productive ministerial participation)</p> <p><i>Please propose an interactive format(s) to stimulate the work of the Conference:</i></p> <p>...</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>	
Parallel thematic round-tables	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree <i>Please elaborate:</i> ...
Interactive discussions e.g. similar to “BBC Question Time”	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree <i>Please elaborate:</i> ...
[please propose an interactive format]	<input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree <i>Please elaborate:</i> ...

7. Any other issues you consider important

<p><i>[please include any issues relevant to the scope of this survey that you may wish to address ...]</i></p> <p><i>Please elaborate:</i></p> <p>...</p>

Annex

Reform of the “Environment for Europe” process: Reform Plan

Excerpt from the report of the Committee on Environmental Policy on its special session (Geneva, 27–29 January 2009)

I. Background

1. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007) recognized the important value of the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process as a unique pan-European forum for tackling environmental challenges and promoting broad horizontal environmental cooperation, and as a pillar of sustainable development in the UNECE region. The EfE process was considered to be an important framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. The added value of the EfE process was recognized in its close links with other regional and subregional initiatives and processes, which help to integrate environmental and sectoral policies.

2. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process, initiated in 1991, needed to be reformed. They committed themselves to continuing a focused and needs-based EfE process concentrated on results-based, action-oriented activities that improve the environment and advance sustainable development in the region and to actively seeking partnerships with civil society, including the private sector. The purpose of the reform was to strengthen its effectiveness and to ensure that it remained appropriate for, and fully aligned with, the growing needs of the UNECE region and the evolving political and economic landscape, as well as the environmental priorities of the region.

3. The Belgrade Ministerial Declaration stated that the reform should focus on, although may not be limited to, the following aspects:

- (a) The format, focus and priorities of the process and Ministerial Conferences;
- (b) Evaluating the performance and impact of the process;
- (c) Attracting the broader interest and more active engagement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector;
- (d) Expanding the use of partnerships as vehicles for improving implementation;
- (e) Leveraging external contributions of expertise, manpower and resources;
- (f) Assessing ways and means to promote more effectively the UNECE region-wide dimension of environmental cooperation;
- (g) The full cost of the process and the effective allocation of available resources;
- (g) Future secretariat arrangements.

4. In order to address the above issues in depth and with due consideration, the ministers invited the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) to develop, in consultation with EfE partners a plan for EfE reform so that it could be endorsed at the political level by UNECE in spring 2009.

5. The ministers further decided that the next EfE Ministerial Conference would be organized on the basis of the agreed reform.

II. Objectives and priorities of the “Environment for Europe” process

6. The EfE process should continue to serve as a mechanism to:
 - (a) Improve the environment throughout the region, contributing to sustainable development which may in turn contribute to poverty eradication, to improving quality of life, and to a safer world;
 - (b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies;
 - (c) Support convergence of environmental policies and approaches, while recognizing the benefits from a diversity of approaches to achieve common goals, and the prioritisation of environmental objectives;
 - (d) Encourage the participation of civil society;
 - (e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation.
7. The political priorities should be based on commitments already taken under the EfE process. These priorities may include:
 - (a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments;
 - (b) Streamlining the implementation by Governments of commitments they have made to existing UNECE legally binding and legally non-binding instruments;
 - (c) Enhancing efforts in environmental monitoring;
 - (d) Ensuring implementation of the Environmental Performance Review programme;
 - (e) Raising public awareness of environmental issues;
 - (f) Promoting linkages between environmental policy, economic and social well-being and competitiveness.
8. Furthermore, thematic priorities of the EfE process would be identified in line with current needs, national circumstances and in respect to future emerging issues.
9. In the future, the EfE process will be based on general principles and agreements on the operational modalities, as described below.

III. General principles

10. The ministers in Belgrade agreed that the EfE process should:
 - (a) Keep its UNECE region-wide dimension and be open for all interested countries of the region;
 - (b) Engage all stakeholders, including the private sector, to strengthen the work in partnership;
 - (c) Maintain close links with other regional and subregional initiatives, and focus on specific needs that are not entirely addressed by other cooperative frameworks, instruments or processes in the region and its subregions;
 - (d) Concentrate on results-based, action-oriented activities;
 - (e) Be kept open to issues on which the process can provide added value;
 - (f) Use delivery as a major criterion of its effectiveness. CEP should regularly consider and assess progress achieved under the process.

11. To complement the above principles, a consensus emerged from CEP in relation to the EfE process and the Conference:

- (a) On the one hand, the EfE process-related principles are as follows:
 - (i) Broader engagement from the Governments to achieve long-term policy integration of environmental considerations into other sectors;
 - (ii) Stronger focus on implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences by relevant responsible actors in the period between Conferences;
 - (iii) Encouragement of and support to subregional activities including stronger involvement of relevant subregional structures in the implementation process, including RECs;
 - (iv) Enhanced cooperation between the regional and subregional partners in the region;
 - (v) Identification of ways to strengthen linkages between the activities under the EfE process and those of relevant international processes.
 - (vi) Enhancement of relevant Governments’ implementation and compliance with their commitments under multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (vii) Utilization of the Environmental Performance Reviews as an important instrument for protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development.
- (b) On the other hand, the Conference-related principles are:
 - (i) The ministerial level of the Conferences should be maintained;
 - (ii) Specific mechanisms for attracting high-level participation, including those from the private sector, should be developed;
 - (iii) A limited number of themes, not more than two, to be identified in advance and addressed by each Conference;
 - (iv) Within the identified themes there should be a focus on specific needs of the subregions, in order to contribute to better cooperation and more substantive and action-oriented outcomes of the Conference;
 - (v) An effective communication strategy, including broad mass-media coverage, as appropriate, should be further developed, comprising, inter alia, special events for journalists, circulation of electronic newsletters and maintaining a dedicated website;
 - (vi) The outcome documents, in all forms, should be focused and action-oriented;
 - (vii) Carbon neutrality of the Conferences based on the voluntary contributions available.

IV. The “Environment for Europe” Conference

Preparatory process

12. Materializing the above-mentioned principles calls for streamlining and improving the preparatory process for the Conferences. In this spirit, the following measures should be taken:

(a) Not later than 18 months before the Conference the CEP at its regular session will decide on not more than two themes and discuss the outline of the agenda of the Conference. When deciding on the themes preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment should be taken into consideration. A decision on the agenda of the Conference should be taken at the regular meeting of the CEP approximately 12 months prior to the Conference and further preparatory work would commence. Documents on substantial themes of the Conference should be released 6 weeks before the Conference;

(b) CEP would act as the convening body for the preparatory process. To maintain the open nature of the preparatory process and the engagement of all stakeholders, representatives of major groups will be invited to participate in meetings of the CEP in preparation of the Conference, as appropriate, in accordance with the existing UN rules and procedures. Furthermore, CEP would consider and approve the official documents for submission to the Conference. Special sessions of the CEP could be scheduled, if needed, in the year prior to the Conference;

(c) Particular efforts would be made to involve private-sector representatives in the preparatory process and the Conference;

(d) To reduce the amount of documents produced for the Conference, only one official document per selected theme would be prepared by the UNECE or another EfE partner, in close cooperation with other EfE partners. The official substantive documentation would thus comprise the pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports;

(e) Interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and other stakeholders could produce other documents featuring their activities and initiatives related to the EfE process, which would be circulated as information documents;

(f) The preparatory process would be serviced by the UNECE secretariat;

(g) For the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, the necessary extrabudgetary financial resources would have to continue to be provided to UNECE to supplement the United Nations core budget resources;

(h) The host country should assume relevant financial commitments.

Format

13. The periodicity, duration and the organization of discussions at the Conference should be as follows:

(a) The Conferences should be held every four to five years, with each Conference lasting two-and-a-half to three days maximum;

(b) Based on the previous experience, the Conference should start with a short opening event. The host country would be given an opportunity to organize events highlighting its special features in addition to the official Conference agenda;

(c) The discussions at the Conference should be arranged in an interactive manner and combine various types of sessions, e.g. plenary sessions, roundtables and moderated panel discussions, with a limited number of main speakers from different stakeholders (e.g. UNECE member States, EfE partners and major groups). When possible, interactive sessions, such as roundtables, could be run in parallel;

(d) The Conference could be structured around the following main clusters (all of them focusing on the agreed priorities):

(i) Plenary sessions for the presentation and discussion of the priority topics;

- (ii) Sessions on ongoing cooperation and partnerships in the UNECE region and its subregions with different stakeholders, including the private sector;
 - (iii) A session of environmental NGOs and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (iv) A session of private sector representatives and ministers in the roundtable format as an integral part of the conference;
 - (v) Sessions dedicated to announcing new partnerships and initiatives by stakeholders;
 - (vi) A brief concluding session with the presentation (and adoption, if appropriate) of the main outcomes of the Conference;
- (e) To address issues relevant to the agenda of the Conference in more detail, side-events should be organized by interested UNECE member States, EfE partners and relevant stakeholders;
- (f) To attract the attention of the private sector, opportunities should be provided for the organization of promotional events such as poster exhibitions, trade fairs, roundtables and environmental award initiatives.

Outcomes

14. Conference outcomes might include:
- (a) A chairperson’s summary;
 - (b) Statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions;
 - (c) An agreed outcome of two pages on follow up and further actions strictly limited, in terms of scope, to the themes of the Conference;
 - (d) Policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that are presented to the Conference by interested countries of the UNECE region and/or organizations taking the lead for these issues, and that were not negotiated within the preparatory process for the Conference;
 - (e) Assessment reports used in preparation of or presented to the Conference that are important for the implementation of the Conference’s outcomes.

V. Implementation

15. Particular efforts should be made by all relevant responsible actors to implement the outcomes of the EfE Ministerial Conferences.
16. Member States should regularly consider how to promote objectives and priorities of the EfE process and strengthen implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences, including through national policies and relevant partnerships.
17. A mid-term review to be convened by the CEP to assess progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the EfE Conferences and provide renewed impetus to the process. The review should be based on existing information. The findings of the review should be taken into account in the preparatory process of the next conference.
18. Active participation by and input of all interested countries of the UNECE, and in particular of interested countries from subregions with specific needs in improving their environmental situation is crucial for the success of the activities under the EfE process.

19. The RECs network should continue to play a role in the preparatory process for the Conference and should be encouraged to play a greater role in the achievement of the overall EfE process’ objectives and priorities.
 20. Other EfE partners should continue to be actively involved in the preparatory process and implementation of the EfE process.
 21. Countries and/or organizations taking the lead for one or more issues are encouraged to do so in ways that would contribute significantly to the EfE process’ objectives and priorities.
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