

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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Website:	...
Date:	28 June 2013

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

The CEE region is a successful example of the EfE process in practice. Undoubtedly, due to the Environment Action Program under the EfE process implemented in Slovakia gradually through 3 National Environmental Action Plans, Slovakia managed in a decisive manner to considerably improve its environment in all relevant fields. Moreover, meeting the commitments set under particular UNECE conventions led to reaching higher European standards.

(b) Enhance the implementation of strengthened national environmental policies

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

See comment under (a).

(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

Sharing the best practices in designing and implementing the policies among countries is a good way to learn how to achieve targets or avoid mistakes.

(d) Encourage the participation of civil society

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

Involvement of civil society is a key issue in communicating environmental policies. Therefore, all stakeholders should participate in designing the policy. The EfE process may help all stakeholders to discuss environmental issues.

(e) Promote broad horizontal environmental cooperation

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

The EfE process is representing a really unique platform for negotiations and meetings of various groups of stakeholders thus promoting a broad horizontal environmental cooperation that is a great benefit of this process.

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:

<p>(a) Improvement of environmental governance, including strengthening environmental institutions and implementation of policy instruments (by your country)</p> <p>– improvement of environmental governance:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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>...</p> <p>– strengthening environmental institutions:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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>...</p> <p>– implementation of policy instruments:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</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:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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>...</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>...</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>

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	<p>...</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>...</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>Slovakia since beginning of the history of Water Convention actively co-operates on its many activities, e.g. monitoring and assessment, Protocol on Water and Health, later in activities of IRBM.</i></p> <p>– 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>Slovakia as an EU member implements most of key objectives of the Water Convention through implementation of the EU directives. Moreover National Report on implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health is regularly in a two- year period submitted to the Government.</i></p> <p><i>In 2009-2012 Slovakia was a successful host to the International Water Assessment Centre operating under the Water Convention.</i></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 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>SK since beginning of the history of Water Convention actively co-operates on its many activities, e.g. monitoring and assessment, Protocol on Water and Health.</i></p> <p>– 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>SK as EU member implements most of key objectives of the Water Convention and protocol on Water and Health through implementation of the EU directives.</i></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>National Report on implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health is submitted to the Government regularly on a two-year basis.</i></p>

<p>Industrial Accidents Convention</p>	<p align="center">– 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>The accession to the Convention was approved by the Parliament on 19 June 2003 and entered into force for the Slovak Republic on 9 September 2003.</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>The Convention is exercised as an integral component of the Slovak legislation. The Ministry of Environment as competent authority and the Ministry of Interior as point of contact were designated by the Slovak government.</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>Since the accession of the Slovak Republic to the Convention were the national implementation reports elaborated and delivered always on time.</p>
<p>Protocol on Civil Liability</p>	<p align="center">– 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>The Slovak Republic will proceed back-to-back with the European Union.</p> <p align="center">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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>...</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 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>Espoo Convention was correctly transposed to national legislation by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 24/2006 Coll. as amended. There is bilateral agreement signed between the Slovak Republic and Austria to simplify and clarify the transboundary impact assessment procedure under the Espoo Convention. For the same reason bilateral agreement between the Slovak Republic and Poland is under preparation with a view to be signed at the end of 2013. Information database system for transboundary</p>

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	<p>impact assessment procedures with Austria is also under preparation.</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>Last report was done in May 2013 filling the questioner “Report of Slovakia on the implementation of the Convention on environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context in period 2010 – 2012”.</p>
<p>Protocol on SEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>) <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> <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>The above- mentioned bilateral agreement between the Slovak Republic and Poland also contains the issue of SEA protocol.</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>The first report was done recently, i.e. in June 2013.</p>
<p>Aarhus Convention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status (<i>more than one box can be ticked</i>) <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>In Slovakia the Aarhus Convention entered into force on 5 March 2006. The Aarhus Convention became part of the national legal system by having been published in the Collection of Acts of the Slovak Republic under No. 43/2006.</i></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>With regard to the fact that the Aarhus Convention provisions cannot be directly applicable, the Convention is applied through the following national law:</i></p> <p><i>Article 45 of the Slovak Republic Constitution (“Everybody has a right to early and complete information on the environment state, and on reasons and consequences of such a state”) and § 3 paragraph 1 of the Act No. 211/2002 on free access to information (“Everybody has a right to access to information available at the obliged persons”) are the fundamental constitutional rights related also to the right to free uncensored expression of opinions;</i></p> <p><i>the Act No. 17/1992 on Environment</i></p> <p><i>the Act No. 205/2004 on collection, storage, and dissemination of environmental information</i></p> <p><i>The legal regulation system is described in the individual articles of the first and the</i></p>

	<p><i>second national implementation reports. The latest legal status will be presented in the third national implementation report, which is just under the process of preparation.</i></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>The first national report on the Aarhus Convention implementation (NIR I) was submitted to the Aarhus Convention Secretariat in 2008, the second national implementation report (NIR II) in 2011 and the third national report (NIR III) is just in the process of preparation.</i></p> <p><i>The reports have been prepared by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, as the responsible and competent subject for the Aarhus Convention, in cooperation with special branch organizations, environmental regional offices, state administration central bodies, and non-governmental organizations that provided updated documentation from the point of view of their competences. The relevant comments were incorporated upon consultations with the entities addressed.</i></p> <p><i>The national implementation reports represent a baseline material, completed by updated data upon documentation of concerned entities addressed. The cooperation with state administration central bodies, environmental regional offices, special environmental institutions, and non-governmental organizations is necessary to ensure successful fulfilment of the Aarhus Convention commitments and evaluation of its implementation progress.</i></p>
<p>Protocol on PRTRs</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>The date of accession is 1 April 2008. The Protocol on PRTRs of the Aarhus Convention, entered into force in the Slovak Republic on 8 October 2009. The Protocol on PRTRs of the Aarhus Convention became part of the national legal system by having been published in the Collection of Acts of the Slovak Republic under No. 353/2010.</i></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>It is implemented by the Act No. 205/2004 Coll. on collection, storage, and dissemination of environmental information and on amendments of some acts as amended posterior.</i></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>The first national implementation report on the Protocol on PRTRs of the Aarhus Convention is just in the process of preparation and will be submitted to the Secretariat at the end of the year 2013.</i></p>
<p>Strategy for ESD</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>In December 2005 “national ESD platform”, the national commission for ESD was set up. The first phase of commission’s work was finished in December 2006 when the National Action Plan for ESD was finalized. This national implementation plan addresses objectives, activities, measures, tentative timetable and means of implementation. Despite this existing policy implementation framework the work on implementation the objectives of the NAP for ESD has been stagnating from the year 2007 due to the weak political and financial support at the governmental level.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">– Implementation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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 style="padding-left: 40px;">– Formal reporting (national implementation reports)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>The strategy has been translated into Slovak language and distributed to the appropriate authorities. Its national contact point was established in 2005. Good basis for starting the implementation process ECE approval was the National Action Plan for SD in July 2005, which includes part of these educational goals of UNECE. In December 2005, "national ESD platform", National Commission for ESD was established and began work on a task, the ESD into education and lifelong learning as such. This committee consists of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Education is the coordinating body of the Commission. The first phase of the Commission's work was completed in December 2006, when a national action plan for ESD was completed. The National Implementation Plan addresses the objectives, activities, actions, preliminary schedule and method of implementation. The national plan was developed with the participatory approach, but due to lack of time can not be all stakeholders and partners were involved in the drafting of it. The action plan was signed by the Minister of Education. At the moment of the action plan is put to public debate and what we hope will be submitted to the Slovak Government for approval.</p> <p>Current status: since 2007 the work of the subcommittees of the National Committee for ESD, which experts at different levels of education are preparing curricula for primary and secondary schools in accordance with the overall curriculum reform of the education system. ESF became one of four horizontal themes that must be respected in the educational program of each school. Experts in the field of higher education are identified possibilities of universities to become more sustainable through the educational content they provide, but also by incorporating SD principals in their overall personal and institutional management. In 2007 was founded CASALEN network of experts from non-governmental, academic and non-governmental organizations, in which cooperation is in the mid-Vysegrad European countries and the Carpathian Convention, should be one of the moderators and mediators ESD in the region. Hungary organized the first meeting in November 2007, where the ECJ future cooperation between the participating countries was discussed. Concluding our intervention, we can say that I. stage was very successful, if we already have some basis and mechanism for implementation of the UNECE Strategy at national level and also to share information and support partnerships between various actors. It is the National Commission for ESD. What you are really missing is a stronger political support, including financial one, at all levels of government.</p> <p>A lot of things to be done there (eg media solutions, training and retraining of teachers, decision, public servants in relation to SD, establishing and strengthening links and better</p>
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	<p>partnerships, etc.), but we believe we are well on the trace and the 2010 implementation of ESD Slovakia should be in full swing. Light in the tunnel towards sustainable thinking and acting is, hopefully, more and more visible.</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>Implementation of Amsterdam declaration goals and action plane by decrease the environmental and health risks from transport.</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>Implementation of Amsterdam declaration goals and action plane is under the responsibility of joint committee, members of this committee are ministries and NGOs.</p> <p>Main goals are to improve the public transport and non-motorised modes of transport and decrease the environmental and health risks from transport.</p> <p align="center">– Reporting (responding to THE PEP survey on progress in the attainment of the Amsterdam Goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never submitted / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> submitting occasionally / <input type="checkbox"/> submitting regularly / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>Slovakia is involved in the preparation process of the high level meeting to be held in Paris next year.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Activities concerning monitoring are mostly managed in harmony with relevant EU directives requirements.</i></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>In terms of the Act No. 17/1992 Coll. On environment and the Act No. 205/2004 Coll. On collection, storage, and dissemination of environmental information the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic annually issues since 1993 a Report on the Environment State evaluating the state of environment in the Slovak Republic. The report is available to general public at the MoE website and the website of Enviroportal – information portal on environment.</p> <p>Another type of reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOE Indicator Reports according D-P-S-I-R structure • Sectoral Indicator Reports – impacts of economy sectors activities (forestry, industry, transport, tourism, energy, agriculture, etc.) on the state of environment • Regional SOE reports <p>All above mentioned types of SOE reports are available on: http://www1.enviroportal.sk/spravny-zp/</p>

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<p>Enterprise environmental monitoring and reporting</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>Environmental monitoring and information systems in the area of environment are implemented pursuant to Act No. 275/2006 Coll. on public administration information systems, Strategy of the Sectoral information system, and Strategy of completion of the complex environmental monitoring information system in the environment (approved by the Slovak government resolution No. 7/2000). Strategy of Environmental Information System Development was approved by the Ministry of Finance in 2009.</p> <p>Environmental information system integrates information from environmental monitoring, information from environmental assessment, and spatial information on territory. Other generated information support activities of environment authorities and subjects that enforce legislation within environmental law. These include mainly the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (MoE SR) and its affiliated organisations, as well as other institutions under different ministries. MoE SR and its daughter organisations maintain other databases, information systems, and internet and intranet portals to support their activities and present their outcomes.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not active / <input 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>...</p>	
<p>Participation in the EPR process as a reviewed country in the future</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Participation in the EPR process as a donor country (in-kind and/or providing financial support)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not interested / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> on-going / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>Implementation of EPR recommendations by the reviewed country</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> accomplished / <input 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>Ensuring public access to environmental</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>Public access to information on the environment in Slovakia and abroad is ensured mainly through the web-site www.enviroportal.sk administered by the Slovak Environment</p>

information	<p>Agency. The information comes from the Slovak Ministry of Environment , professional organizations, NGOs and from public. The information provided a major contribution to raising environmental awareness of the population.</p> <p>Because the portal is a basic platform for publishing outputs of information systems, it provides authorized and verified overviews in a wide range of environmental topics, there are two possible ways to get them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • according to the type of user (Agenda) and • according to the type of required information. <p>The role of bookmarks Agenda is to provide citizens, businesses and public administration with targeted information. In addition, users can choose from environmental topics (climate change, waste, contaminated sites, water, air, energy etc.), information and monitoring systems (EnviroGeoPortal, Catalogue of objects) and documents leading to general information on the subject. At the same time, this portal references to institutions, organizations and companies that deal with this theme more deeply. For visitor this portal provides news, calendar of upcoming environmental events, jobs searching and calls for project proposals.</p>
Ensuring public participation in environmental-decision making	<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>Public participation in consultation process of the river basin management plans (Water Framework Directive)</i></p>
Ensuring public access to environmental justice	<p><input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input 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>...</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>The Slovak Republic considers all aspects of policies in the economy including the impact on environment.</p> <p>...</p>	
Mainstreaming the environment into economic development	<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>Policies on economic development are being assessed also from the environmental perspective, for example through the Annex of impacts which contains part dedicated to environmental impacts of policy, measure or legislative proposal.</p>
Implementing environmental policies through economic/market instruments (e.g. phasing out subsidies,	<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>The Slovak Republic is using range of environmental instruments, including economic instruments such as environmentally related taxes or charges, tradable scheme (EU ETS), or feed-in tariffs system. Moreover, Slovak Republic has already started phasing out subsidies, for example abolishing tax exemptions in energy taxation (2011).</p>

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introducing environmental taxation, payment for ecosystems services, etc.)	
Implementing environmental policies through regulatory/normative instruments (e.g. norms, standards, bans, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> not started / <input type="checkbox"/> initiated / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in progress / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> well-implemented / <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <i>Implementation of EU legislation.</i>
Implementing environmental policies through information based/voluntary instruments (e.g. labelling, etc.)	<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 Well-implemented through EMAS, GPP, labelling schemes. The National environmental label scheme, which awards the environmental label “Environmentally friendly product”, takes into account efficient use of natural resources in developing environmental criteria in the special conditions for each product group. In 1997 Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic launched the National Program for National Evaluation and Labelling of products. Act No. 469/2002 on environmental product labelling, as amended, from the 1st December 2002 regulates the conditions and procedure for granting national environmental label “Environmentally friendly product”.

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:

<p>(a) Ratifying and implementing the relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (by your country)</p> <p><i>Please provide additional information, as relevant, that was not provided under section 3(b) (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>
<p>(b) Implementing the Astana Water Action (by your country)</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"/> not foreseen</p> <p><i>Most of objectives of Astana Water Action are addressed by implementation of the Water Framework Directive and others water directives.</i></p>
<p>(c) Promoting a green economy (by your country)</p>

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

For example work on Green Growth Indicators. Link (only in Slovak):

<http://www1.enviroportal.sk/indikatory/schema.php?schema=124>

The set of green growth indicators was created. It follows conclusions of the Green Growth national workshop (2011), the recommendations of OECD Environmental Performance Review: Slovak Republic (2011) as well as the recommendations of OECD Economic Survey of Slovak Republic (2012). The current set of green growth indicators includes 33 individual indicators based on relevance to the Slovak condition and data availability. Four of them are national indicators describing voluntary environmental policy instruments. The selected indicators are structured into four interrelated groups: environmental and resource productivity; natural asset base; environmental quality of life; policy responses and economic opportunities. Presented indicators become one of the tools that may shape the view of government and the public to green growth and can help to shift towards a more positive view of the adopted measures, which are essential to the transition to a green economy in Slovakia. The set of indicators is available in Slovak only on: <http://www1.enviroportal.sk/indikatory/schema.php?schema=124> .

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

See answer above

(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):

...

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: ...

Please elaborate (up to 250 words):

...

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):

...

Enhancing the work on greening the economy and the mainstreaming of environmental concerns into the economic development

A possible “emerging” theme for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to follow up on the Astana EfE and Rio+20 Conferences commitments

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Current economic situation in many countries has caused that environmental issues are not on the top of the list of priorities. An approach that tries to combine economic and environmental issues together and, thus promote economic and environmental development at the same time should become the priority of discussion and analysis. Strategies to achieve greener growth are needed. A return to “business as usual” would be unwise and ultimately unsustainable.

Slovakia is of the opinion that concept of green economy in the context of sustainable development is a suitable policy instrument for mobilization and strengthening international cooperation for achieving more ambitious results in the framework of sustainable development. Slovak Republic is of the opinion that a wide range of instruments is needed for achieving the results of a green, inclusive and competitive economy– i.e. economic ones (taxes, charges, cap-and-trade systems, subsidies, support schemes, etc), but also command-and-control (CAC) instruments (in the area where markets do not exist or do exist, but with the market failure). For the each sector (with specific circumstances) the specific policy instruments are required to achieve the green economy. Of course, there have to be coherence between them in order to

	<p>gain yield from synergy effects. However, all of the instruments have to fulfil at least one condition – the effectiveness (cost effectiveness) of the instrument for achieving the goal (green economy). Also, the instruments should be designed so that sustainable production or consumption will be favoured against unsustainable. The important role in this area plays voluntary instruments and information instruments.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p>Slovakia thinks that 10- year framework for Sustainable consumption and production as well as sustainable public procurement and sustainable lifestyle are the most relevant programmes not only for Slovakia, but at the time of global financial and economic crisis also for other countries. We would like to see this work to continue also in the forthcoming period, as its relevance is even higher in the green economy context. We perceive the “EfE work” in this field as very important and supportive as a source of expert information that can be further used and developed in national policies and strategies.</p> <p>Sustainable consumption and production is related to economic development and at the same time covers also social/labour issues and environmental issues (energy, materials management, etc.). From this point of view, first two topics may be complementary.</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>IFIs will play an important role in financing sustainable development. IFIs will bring valuable expertise in designing financial transactions and sharing knowledge across countries. The mandate of IFIs is to promote economic growth and we support the IFIs work in this field.</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>Supporting proactive engagement in negotiating some of the world’s most intractable problems, like threats to natural resources, affecting water and food security. Discussions should aim to contribute to knowledge development and capacity building in support of the region’s „climate security“ diplomats in negotiations; advance international cooperation on the environment; address questions of reform in promoting engagement, accountability and transparency in the governance of the international environmental regime.</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>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree We strongly support to organize this high-level segment. Development of the SEIS at national and international levels is a very important and cost-effective tool.	
<p>Organizing a high-level segment on UNECE MEAs</p> <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ...	
Role of public participation in effective implementation of MEAs	A possible theme for a possible high-level segment on UNECE MEAs (of relevance to all UNECE MEAs) <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ...
<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> <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ...	
Greening the economies	Elaboration of subregional roadmaps (e.g. EU, SEE, Central Asia, Caucasus, Eastern Europe) <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ... Elaboration/harmonization of regional eco-standards for products and production processes <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ... Other (please suggest demand-driven frameworks/structures) <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree Please elaborate (up to 250 words): ...
Strengthening implementation of ESD	Mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational training to meet future labour market demand <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree The main responsibility lies on the Ministry of Education.

	<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>ESD is a part of primary and secondary education.</p> <p>Implementing an ESD school plan in every school (i.e. addressing campus management, curricula and community interaction)</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>Based on the current Slovak legislation, ERSD is implemented in curricula.</p>
Strengthening environmental considerations in other social and economic sectors	<p>Sustainable urban development (e.g. bringing together the relevant activities under THE PEP, Environment and Health process, and green building)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p><i>Please elaborate (up to 250 words):</i></p> <p>...</p>

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>We support organization of parallel thematic round-tables since they reflect a great amount of opinions and options as how to tackle different issues.</p>	
Parallel thematic round-tables	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> strongly agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree / <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree / <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree</p> <p>Parallel thematic roundtables enable a great number of participants to express their views on one subject, and, consequently, come to acceptable solutions.</p>
Interactive discussions e.g. similar to “BBC Question Time”	<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:</i></p> <p>...</p>
[please propose an interactive format]	<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:</i></p> <p>...</p>

7. Any other issues you consider important

[please include any issues relevant to the scope of this survey that you may wish to address ...]

Please elaborate:

...

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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