

MEETING OF THE EXTENDED BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Geneva, 19 May 2009

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

to be held at the Palais des Nations (Salle XI), Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 May 2009, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Meeting objectives
2. Options for the preparation of pan-European environment assessment(s) for the next Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (EfE)
3. Assessments and statistical reports that might be made available for the selection of Conference’s themes
4. Other business

II. Annotations to the agenda

Introduction

1. Pan-European assessment reports on the environment have been considered as important contributions and results of the EfE process. Four reports that have been published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) since the Sofia Ministerial Conference of 1995 provided crucial information about the state of Europe’s environment, challenges and trends, and served as a basis for ministerial discussion and decisions. At the Belgrade EfE Conference in 2007, the Ministers called on EEA to consider preparing the fifth report for the next EfE Ministerial Conference (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/8, para. 7).
2. The EfE reform plan prepared by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) for endorsement by the UNECE Commission at its upcoming session (Geneva, 30 March-1 April 2009) establishes that the pan-European assessment would be among the official substantive documentation for EfE Conferences. It states, furthermore, that preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment should be taken into account when the CEP will be deciding, not later than 18 months before the Conference on not more than two themes for the Conference and discuss the outline of the Conference (ECE/CEP/S/152, annex I, para.12).

Delegates are requested to complete the registration form enclosed to the agenda of the meeting, and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting by e-mail (efe@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva’s Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map available at: www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 6307.

3. The EEA has recently informed the CEP about developments in EU policy as well as regarding the manner of conducting environmental assessments that impact its capacity to produce a fifth pan-European assessment report for the Astana Conference. After an initial exchange of views on the matter by correspondence, the CEP Bureau has agreed to meet for one day in Geneva to brainstorm on possibilities for the preparation of pan-European assessment(s) for the next EfE Conference. The brainstorming meeting to be held on 19 May 2009 will be in the form of an Extended Bureau meeting with the invitation of selected interested countries, representatives of governing bodies of UNECE environmental conventions, CEP expert groups on assessment and environmental performance reviews, EEA and other relevant partners and institutions. A note by the secretariat presenting various options will be circulated among meeting participants prior to the meeting.

Item 1. Meeting objectives

(10 – 10.10 a.m.)

4. The CEP Chairman will open the meeting with introductory remarks on the meeting objectives, organization of the discussions and the expected outcome.

Item 2. Options for the preparation of pan-European environment assessment(s) for the next Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (EfE)

(10.10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

5. The EEA will be invited to inform the meeting about the developments within and outside the agency that have an impact on its capacity to prepare a fifth pan-European assessment report. The meeting may wish to discuss opportunities to assist the EEA in overcoming existing challenges. In the light of this discussion, it may also wish to consider various options that would lead to the production for the next EfE Conference of a single environment assessment or a set of assessments providing the Ministers with sufficient information about the state of Europe’s environment and main trends and challenges.

Item 3. Assessments and statistical reports that might be made available for the selection of Conference’s themes

(3 – 5.40 p.m.)

6. Invited international bodies and institutions will inform the meeting about the ongoing or planned preparation of assessments and statistical reports on the environment. The meeting will then discuss if preliminary findings of such reports could be made available to the CEP when it will be selecting, at its session in March 2010, themes for the next EfE Conference.

7. Overarching questions for this discussion might be:

(a) What type of information and in which form would help delegations in selecting themes for the Conference?

(b) Which assessments and statistical reports are already or will be soon under preparation?

(c) What kind of additional reports might be commissioned by the CEP Bureau to help the discussions in March 2010?

(d) What would be resource needs to cover gaps in the assessments and who could provide donor funds?

8. The meeting is expected to come up with specific proposals on the above issues as well as with a recommended format for submission of preliminary findings by authors of relevant assessment and statistical reports to the CEP at its March 2010 meeting.

Item 4. Other business

(5.40 - 6 p.m.)

9. The meeting may wish to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose items are invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.
