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Report of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment on its sixteenth session

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. At its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October 2014), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) mandated the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment to review progress made by pan-European countries in developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). CEP requested that the progress be reviewed against the targets and performance indicators (ECE/CEP/2014/8) that it approved at its twentieth session, and noted that the review should serve as a basis to prepare an evaluation report on SEIS development for the Eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016). The Working Group was further requested to provide an initial version of its evaluation report to CEP at its twenty-first session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015).
2. The sixteenth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment was held on 16 and 17 April 2015 in Istanbul in order to kick-off the work on the review of SEIS development by the pan-European countries.
3. The Working Group meeting was organized back to back with the Regional Environmental Information Network Conference (Istanbul, 13–15 April 2015) consulting on the elaboration of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) with regard to its regional component for the pan-European region. The organizational setting of both meetings contributed to forging mutual benefits between SEIS and the GEO regional process.

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by representatives of ministries or agencies of environment, and in some cases from the statistical offices, of the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
4. In addition, representatives of the following organizations and forums participated: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; the European Environment Agency (EEA); the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia; and the international non-profit organization, Zoï Environment Network. Representatives of the team implementing the Forest and Biodiversity Governance including Environmental Monitoring (FLERMONECA) project, financed by the European Union, also attended the meeting.

C. Procedural matters and election of officers

5. The Working Group adopted the agenda for its sixteenth session, as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2015/1.
6. The Working Group elected Ms Katerina Nikolovska (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) as its Chair and Ms. Maia Javakhishvili (Georgia) and Mr. Yuri Tsaturov (Russian Federation) as its Vice-Chairs for the period of the 2015 mandate.

II. Shared Environmental Information System in support of environmental assessments, reviews and outlooks

7. The Working Group considered the components of various environmental assessment reports, reviews and outlooks prepared in the context of different environmental intergovernmental processes or under multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to better understand the need for data and information supporting the preparation of those reports. The Working Group was acquainted with:

- (a) The GEO process and the components and data requirements for the pan-European GEO Regional Assessment;
- (b) *The European environment — state and outlook 2015* (SOER 2015),¹ and the data and information used to generate that report;
- (c) Regional air emission reporting requirements;
- (d) The regional process for the assessment of the status of water resources, and the need for common water pressure and status indicators;
- (e) Global and pan-European forest reporting and assessment processes, including reporting methods and schedules, data and subsets of indicators;
- (f) The Environment and Health Information System, including data requirements for calculation of environment and health indicators;
- (g) Data collection under the various MEAs.

8. The Working Group agreed that, for the pan-European SEIS to facilitate the generation of the various environmental assessment reports and decrease the reporting burden on countries, it should facilitate access to data and information produced in common formats and standards in the following areas:

- (a) Air pollution, air quality and ozone depletion;
- (b) Biodiversity;
- (c) Chemicals and waste;
- (d) Climate change;
- (e) Energy;
- (f) Green economy;
- (g) Land and soil;
- (h) Water.

9. Those themes were generally accepted as corresponding to regional priorities and/or Global Environmental Goals.²

¹ EEA, Copenhagen. Available from www.eea.europa.eu/soer.

² See UNEP Global Environment Goals website <http://geg.informea.org/>.

III. Environment-related high-level conferences in the period 2015–2017

10. The Working Group reflected on the calendar of high-level environmental conferences and assessments related to them, including: the Seventh Forest Europe Ministerial Conference (Madrid, 20–21 October 2015); the Eighth EfE Ministerial Conference (Batumi, June 2016); and the Sixth Environment and Health Ministerial Conference (2017).

11. The Working Group concluded that the themes of air and green economy were common to all those conferences. Therefore, the data sets through which pan-European SEIS was to be defined in the first step should possibly be those that were commonly used for understanding the level of air pollution and assessing air quality and progress in the transition to a green economy.

12. At the same time, the Working Group acknowledged that, as green economy was a cross-cutting theme, data commonly applied under other sectoral themes could be used as proxies to assess progress in greening of economies.

13. The Working Group then reflected on the existing data availability to set a 2015 milestone for the establishment of the pan-European SEIS that would be ambitious, but realistic. To that end, it considered the progress achieved in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in producing and sharing environmental indicators.

14. Based on the above considerations, the Working Group agreed on a list of 67 specific data sets for the pan-European SEIS that should be produced and shared, to the extent possible, in the course of 2015 by all the pan-European countries (see annex).

15. The Working Group further agreed that it would discuss at its future meetings specific data to be added to the pan-European SEIS content list for gradual implementation until 2020.

IV. Review of the progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region

16. The Working Group discussed a concept for a mechanism to evaluate the performance of countries in developing the pan-European SEIS.³ Such a mechanism should show which of the data currently agreed to constitute the pan-European SEIS were effectively produced and shared together with the necessary accompanying information as per the SEIS targets and performance indicators. The mechanism should help in identifying possible gaps — separately for each data set — in data production and sharing and show progress in eliminating those gaps. At the same time, it should be user-friendly and allow concise but precise reporting within a relatively short period of time and not require extensive national consultations to that end.

³ The concept is annexed to the informal document on reporting the performance in establishing and operating the Shared Environmental Information System, submitted by the secretariat to the Working Group for consideration. The document is available on the meeting web page at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38414#/>.

17. The Working Group agreed that the secretariat's concept sufficiently addressed the requirements set for the reporting mechanism and so should be developed further and tested.

18. The Working Group therefore requested its members from Armenia Austria, Georgia, Finland, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to work closely with the secretariat and EEA in developing and testing the concept for the reporting mechanism. It also invited a representative from the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia to support that work. Members from Georgia, Finland and Italy noted that their involvement would require confirmation from their Governments, which would be communicated to the secretariat after the meeting.

19. While developing and testing the concept of the reporting mechanism, the development group should rate the availability and accessibility of data and related information for the list of 67 data sets for the pan-European countries. The secretariat should then compile the results of that exercise for review by the Working Group at its next session, which should be organized no later than the first half of September in order to allow the Working Group to agree on its evaluation of country performance in SEIS establishment for timely submission to CEP.

20. The secretariat was requested to explore the possibilities to organize the next session in the first half of September and communicate them to the Working Group.⁴

V. Other business and closure of the meeting.

21. The Working Group and secretariat thanked the donors, in particular Norway, Switzerland and the Russian Federation, for the financial support provided to organize the sixteenth session. The Chair then closed the meeting.

⁴ It was agreed after the meeting that the seventeenth session of the Working Group would be held on 7 and 8 September 2015.

Annex

List of specific data sets of the pan-European Shared Environment Information System for implementation during the course of 2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Data sets</i>
Air pollution and ozone depletion	Pan-European priority	Emissions of pollutants into the atmospheric air	1	Emissions of sulphur expressed in sulphur dioxide (total, stationary and mobile sources)
	Global Environmental Goal		2	Emissions of nitrogen oxides expressed in nitrogen dioxide (total, stationary and mobile sources)
	Data collection under the ECE CLRTAP ^a		3	Emissions of non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs) (total, stationary and mobile sources)
	Health and well-being considerations under the green economy concept		4	Emissions of ammonia (total, stationary and mobile sources)
			Data collection under the Montreal Protocol ^b	5
	6		Emissions of lead (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	7		Emissions of cadmium (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	8		Emissions of mercury (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	9		Emissions of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	10		Emissions of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	11		Emissions of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxin and polychlorinated dibenzofuran (PCDD/F) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	12		Emissions of total suspended particles (TSP) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	13		Emissions of coarse particulate matter (PM ₁₀) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	
	14		Emissions of fine particulate matter (PM _{2.5}) (total, stationary and mobile sources)	

<i>Theme</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Data sets</i>	
Climate change	Pan-European priority Global Environmental Goal Data collection under the UNFCCC ^c	Ambient air quality	15	Annual average concentration of sulphur dioxide	
			16	Annual average concentration of nitrogen dioxide	
			17	Annual average concentration of ground-level ozone	
			18	Annual average concentration of particulate matter (PM)	
			Consumption of ozone-depleting substances	19	Total ozone depleting potential (ODP) of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)
				20	Total ODP of Halons
				21	Total ODP of other fully halogenated CFCs
				22	Total ODP of carbon tetrachloride
		23		Total ODP of 1,1,1-trichloroethane	
		24		Total ODP of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)	
		25	Total ODP of methyl bromide		
		26	Average annual deviation from the long-term average temperature		
		27	Annual deviation from the long-term average precipitation		
		28	Aggregated GHG emissions including emissions/removals from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)		
29	Aggregated GHG emissions by energy, industrial processes, solvent and other product use, agriculture, land use and forestry, waste				

<i>Theme</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Data sets</i>	
Water	Pan-European priority	Renewable freshwater resources	30	Renewable freshwater resources	
	Global Environmental Goal				
	Resilience, efficiency, health and well-being considerations under the green economy concept		Freshwater abstraction	31	Total freshwater abstraction (per river basin, season and year)
				32	Freshwater abstraction by water supply industry; households; agriculture, forestry and fishing; manufacturing; electric industry; other economic activities
	Data collection through the UNEP/United Nations Statistics Division questionnaire		Total water use	33	Water exploitation index
				34	Total freshwater available
	Data collection under the ECE Protocol on Water and Health			35	Total freshwater use
				36	Losses of water during transport
				37	Freshwater use by households; agriculture, forestry and fishing; irrigation; manufacturing; electric industry; other economic activities
				38	Population connected and not-connected to water supply
				39	Mean concentration of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) in major rivers
				40	Mean concentration of ammonium in major rivers
	Nutrients in freshwater			41	Mean concentration of phosphates in major rivers
				42	Mean concentration of nitrates in major rivers
				43	Mean concentration of total phosphorus in major lakes
				44	Mean concentration of nitrates in major lakes
45				Mean concentration of nitrates in groundwater	
Population connected to wastewater treatment			46	Population connected to a wastewater collecting system (with and without treatment facilities)	

<i>Theme</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Data sets</i>
		Wastewater treatment facilities	47	Wastewater treated in urban wastewater treatment plants (primary, secondary, tertiary)
		Polluted (not-treated) wastewaters	48	Wastewater discharged
			49	Non-treated/not adequately treated wastewater
Biodiversity	Pan-European priority	Protected areas	50	Total areas under protection (International Union for Conservation of Nature categories)
	Global Environmental Goal			
	Resilience considerations under the green economy concept	Forests and other wooded land	51	Total forest area (forest and other wooded land)
		Threatened and protected species	52	Number of species protected — mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, vascular plants, mosses, lichens, fungi, algae
			53	Number of species threatened — mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, vascular plants, mosses, lichens, fungi, algae
Land and soil	Pan-European priority	Land uptake	54	Total land uptake
	Global Environmental Goal		55	Land uptake by mining and quarrying; construction; manufacturing; technical infrastructure; transport and storage infrastructure; residential, including recreational, infrastructure; landfills, waste dumps and tailing pits
	Resilience considerations under the green economy concept			
Energy	Global Environmental Goal	Final energy consumption	56	Total final energy consumption
	Efficiency considerations under the green economy concept		57	Final energy consumption by category (industry; transport; households; commercial and public services; agriculture, forestry and fishery; non-specified, non-energy use)
	Data collection for the International Energy Agency energy balance	Total primary energy supply	58	Total primary energy supply (production, export, import, bins, stock changes)
			59	Total primary energy supply by source (coal; crude oil; oil products; natural gas; nuclear energy; hydropower; geothermal and solar energy; biofuels and waste; electricity and heat)

<i>Theme</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Environmental indicator</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Data sets</i>
Waste	Pan-European priority (chemicals and waste) Global Environmental Goal Data collection under the Basel Convention ^d	Waste generation	60	Total waste generation
			61	Waste generation by source (agriculture, forestry and fishery; mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; construction; other economic activities; households)
		Management of hazardous waste	62	Hazardous waste generated
			63	Hazardous waste imported
			64	Hazardous waste exported
			65	Total hazardous waste treated or disposed of
			66	Hazardous waste treated or disposed of, of which recycling, incineration, landfilling, or other method of disposal
67	Stock of hazardous waste			

^a Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

^b Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

^c United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

^d Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.