

Economic Commission for Europe
Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context
Seventh session

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment in
a Transboundary Context serving as the
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Third session

Minsk, 13–16 June 2017
Item 8 of the provisional agenda
**Panel discussion on the role of the Protocol and the
Convention in addressing climate change**

Information on panel discussion on the role of the Protocol and the Convention in addressing climate change

To be held in Minsk, (Hotel Beijing) on Friday, 16 June 2017
(tentative timing: 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.)

I. Introduction

1. The panel discussion on the role of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in addressing climate change will be held as decided by the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment at its fifth and sixth meetings (Geneva, April and November 2016) and further to the recommendations by the Bureau at its meeting in January 2016.
2. The panel discussion will take place during the high-level segment of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The high-level segment will be co-chaired by His Excellency, Mr. Andrei Kovkhuto, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and His Excellency, Mr. Neno Dimov, Minister of Environment and Water of Bulgaria.
3. The panel discussion will be moderated by Mr. Hugo von Meijenfeldt, Coordinator for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, (formerly, the Dutch Climate Envoy). The panel will comprise speakers from Parties, intergovernmental and a non-governmental organization and academia.
4. The panel will begin with introductory remarks by the moderator, followed by presentation of success stories/good practice cases from within and outside the UNECE region, and then by presentation of key points by the panellist (5–7 min per panellist) as well as comments/clarifying questions on the presentations. Next, the representatives of academia and the NGO will present their views (5–7 minutes each) on selected key questions followed by moderated discussion on these questions. After that, the panel will be opened for questions and observations from the audience (interventions from the floor

should be concise, precise and brief). The last ten minutes of the panel are reserved for concluding remarks by the moderator. The time allowed for this agenda item is 2 (or maximum 2,5) hours in total.

5. The consolidated key conclusions of the panel discussion will be included in the report of the Meetings of the Parties' sessions.

II. Background

6. Parties to Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA acknowledge the significant role that in particular the Protocol but also the Convention can play in integrating climate change considerations into strategic planning and development activities. Both the Convention and the Protocol on SEA explicitly refer to "climate" among the environmental factors that they address. Moreover, the sectors that are mainly responsible for the continuous increase of greenhouse gas emissions, i.e.: agriculture, energy, industry and transport, all fall under the scope of the Convention and the Protocol. The two treaties set out procedures that contribute to a more transparent and informed decision-making, helping to address climate change through identifying related key issues, analyzing baseline trends, and bringing these to the attention of stakeholders and authorities early on. They also allow the consideration of various scenarios and the assessment of alternative actions that would make a difference in terms of climate change. Finally, the treaties provide for evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures chosen.

7. Although SEA is increasingly used for the assessment of governmental plans and programmes in the UNECE region and beyond, alongside with the application of environmental impact assessment (EIA) to projects, and despite the fact that the evidence for and the awareness of the climate change related impacts only continues to grow, the provisions of the Protocol or the Convention are not yet consistently and fully used for addressing climate change.

8. The above holds true despite the fact that, in recent years, much effort has been made to promote SEA and EIA as tools to ensure that issues related to mitigation of and adaptation to the climate change are properly considered in planning, strategic decision-making and in project design and related development consent procedures. To this end, a number of guidance documents have been prepared, at the national, regional and international levels.¹ International financial institutions have also set out climate change requirements regarding projects they fund.²

9. What is more, by now, several Parties to the Convention and the Protocol have gained an extensive experience in addressing climate change through SEA and EIA. Consequently, sharing this experience and the benefits and challenges identified will

¹ The international/regional guidance documents include, for example, the European Commission's: Guidance on integrating climate change and biodiversity into SEA <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/pdf/SEA%20Guidance.pdf>; and Guidance on integrating climate change and biodiversity into EIA <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/pdf/EIA%20Guidance.pdf>; Advisory Note on SEA and Adaptation to Climate Change by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) http://content-ext.undp.org/aplaws_publications/1769217/SEA%20and%20Adaptation%20to%20CC%20full%20version.pdf.

² See for example the climate change requirements by EIB/JASPERS regarding the major (cohesion policy) projects supported from the EU funds <http://www.jaspersnetwork.org/download/attachments/19464967/3.%20JASPERS%20on%20Climate%20Change%20requirements.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1443715565000&api=v2>

provide an useful basis for discussing further needs and actions that could be undertaken in the framework of the Convention and the Protocol with a view to mainstreaming the application of the two treaties in addressing climate change within the UNECE region (and beyond).

III. Objectives

10. The event will provide an opportunity for Parties and stakeholders to present experience in using SEA and EIA as tools for integrating climate change issues in plans, programmes, and project development proposals, as well as to identify benefits and challenges in this regard. Based on the practical examples and statements presented, the panel will aim at proposing actions to raise awareness on and to further enhance the role of the Protocol and the Convention for the development of national climate change action and planning, and for the incorporation of specific climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into sectoral plans and programmes, and the planned development activities.

11. The draft workplan under the Convention and the Protocol for 2017–2020³, which the Meetings of the Parties is expected to adopt in Minsk, proposes two activities related to climate change that could be undertaken subject to funding: a workshop or a seminar for the exchange of good practice on the application of the Protocol on SEA to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and the development of good practice recommendations for the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into plans and programmes through SEA. The outcomes of the panel discussions can be made use of and followed up when planning and implementing these, and possible future activities (such as related pilot projects; training or fact sheets). They could also be taken into account in the possible elaboration of a long-term strategy and action plan for the future of the Convention and the Protocol.

IV. Provisional programme

I. Introductory remarks by the moderator, Mr. Hugo von Meijenfeldt, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (7-10 minutes)

II. Success stories/ Good practice examples; main outcomes and achievements (5-7 min/panellist. *The moderator, the other panellists or the audience may ask any immediate questions after the presentations*)

1. **H.E. Mr. Andrei Kovkhuto**, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus
2. **H.E. Mr. Jan Szyszko**, Minister of the Environment, Poland
3. **Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic**, Head of Strategic Environmental assessment Division, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Slovenia
4. **Mr Jiri Dusik**, International technical specialist, UNDP (Vietnam): Is there a need for a consolidated European experience with climate-related considerations in EIA and SEA processes?

³ ECE/MP.EIA/2017/1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2017/1, annex II.

III. Presentation of views from civil society and academia (5-7 minutes/each) on the following key questions:

- Benefits of addressing climate change in SEA and EIA;
 - Key principles for the efficient integration of the climate change related considerations into strategic planning and project development through SEA and EIA;
 - Differences and/or similarities between SEA and EIA in addressing the climate change
 - Challenges for the efficient practice and/or its mainstreaming and how to overcome them;
 - Proposals for follow-up activities: How to promote the awareness and implementation of the Convention and the Protocol as tools for addressing climate change, within (and beyond) the UNECE region;
1. **Ms. Mara Silina**, Co-chair of the European ECO Forum
 2. **Mr. Matthew Cashmore**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Urban and Rural Development, University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden: Mainstreaming climate change: Towards effective and efficient environmental assessment (EA) practices

IV. Comments and moderated discussion by the panellists on the above key questions (up to 20 minutes)

- V. **Observations and questions** from the audience to the panellists
- VI. **Concluding remarks by the moderator (10 minutes)**

V. Key points/abstracts

H.E. Mr. Andrei Kovkhuto

- Climate change has a huge impact on economic processes. Mitigation and adaptation measures undertaken at the earliest stages have a significant impact on economic growth, provide impetus to new industries, and extend opportunities for attracting investments, gaining competitive advantages, which in its turn has a positive effect on the level of social welfare.
- To make progress towards combating and adapting to climate change, and halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems, it is essential to fully integrate these issues in the strategic plans, programmes and projects implemented by the countries.
- The Espoo Convention and the Protocol on SEA provide us with effective tools, for the systematic integration of climate change issues into a wide range of public and private projects and programmes, through environmental impact assessment

- Environmental impact assessment is an effective mechanism to prevent / reduce the impact of planned activities on the environment, which facilitate the adoption and implementation of measures to adapt to climate change.

H.E. Mr. Jan Szyszko

- Introduction to Poland's upcoming presidency of the climate negotiations process. Poland's ambition is the 24th UNFCCC COP achieve results not only limited to addressing climate change, but also contributing to bringing back the world on a sustainable development pathway, responding to environmental, economic and societal challenges.
- Presentation of Polish experience: the Guide to investment preparation respecting climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as resilience to natural disasters - a project initiated recently which is an example of a living synergy between the climate and EIA processes.

Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinsic

- Climate change issues in SEA for land use plans in Slovenia,
- Good practice SEA example for municipality of Ljubljana,
- Integration of climate change into the SEA process,
- Transport and flood protection issues as SEA challenges.

Mr. Jiri Dusik

- Post-Paris agenda and need for integrated consideration of climate-environment nexus in decision-making;
- Lessons from the use of European experiences with EIA, SEA and climate change assessments in South East Asia;
- Suggestions for potential future elaboration of UNECE guidance on integration of climate-related considerations into EIA and SEA processes.

Ms. Mara Silina

- Benefits of addressing climate change in SEA and EIA - why do we need/want that
- Challenges for the efficient practice and/or its mainstreaming: lack of proper legal basis in many countries, relatively low awareness/interest about these issues and their interlinkages, scattered experience in different countries etc.
- Proposals for follow-up activities at different levels:-
 - UNECE secretariat/treaty bodies: Strategic plan for both instruments and work plans where climate change is included; links with other relevant MEAs, close cooperation with UNFCCC and IPCC; good practice guide(s); joint events, recommendations for countries how to integrate climate change into SEA and EIA processes etc.

- UNECE region: possibilities for sharing experience and information within and beyond the region (e.g. through workshops, but also via online platforms) and collection of this material and preparing good practice guide(s)
- National: possible revision of the legal basis of SEA and EIA aiming at inclusion of climate change in these processes; a lot of educational work is still needed for developers/project proponents and authorities to understand the importance of EIA and SEA and what they can do, broad awareness raising campaigns
- Local: apart from educational work there could be small scale practical pilot projects where climate change is included in local development planning or in specific projects
- Strong and timely involvement of all stakeholders including civil society organization – at all levels.

Matthew Cashmore

- Political commitment to mainstreaming climate change is reasonably high globally, with notable policy innovations having taken place in European (e.g. in Sweden and Denmark) and other countries.
- The technical capacity to successfully integrate climate change considerations in EA exists, but practice remains highly variable primarily due to limited political commitment to ensuring EA is effective.
- Future initiatives must ensure climate-inclusive EA practices are viewed as salient, legitimate and credible. Strong provisions for quality control and sustained programmes of capacity development are central to achieving these ambitions.
- Efficiency can be promoted through further discussion and targeted training on such issues as data needs, the use of scenarios, and managing and communicating uncertainty.

VI. Speaker biographies

Hugo G. von Meijenfeldt

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



2016-present: SDG-coordinator

2013-2015: Consul General San Francisco

2009-2013: Special Envoy Climate Change

Ministry of the Environment

2009-2013: Deputy / Acting Director General

2006-2008: Director International Affairs

2002-2006: Director Soil & Water

1994-2002: Head / Deputy Director Europe (including Presidency 1997, 3 years chairman of the Committee on Environmental Policy of UNECE, Geneva)

1982-1994: legislation and litigation with regard to soil remediation programmes; wrote several articles for international conferences and journals;

Law School, Free University, Amsterdam

1974-1981: majoring in public law and policies several scientific positions.

Andrei Kovkhuto

Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus



Born in 1960 in Mogilev.

In 1983 graduated from the faculty of geography of the V.I. Lenin Belarussian State University.

Candidate of Geological Science, Associate Professor since 1992.

In 2007 graduated from the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus with a specialty State and Local Governance.

1983-1985 – intern-researcher at the Institute of Geology and Geography of the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR,

1985 to 1996 – intern-researcher, junior researcher, research of the Institute of Geology, Geochemistry and Geophysics of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

1996 to 2004 - Senior Researcher, Scientific Secretary of the Institute of Geological Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

2004-2010 – Deputy Director of the Department of Geology of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus.

2010- 2013 – Head of the Republican Unitary Enterprise "Belarusian Scientific Research Geological Prospecting Institute".

2013-2014 – First Deputy General Director of the RUE "Research and Production Center for Geology", and then Director of the RUE "Belarusian State Geological Center."

2015 – General Director of RUE "Research and Production Center for Geology".

Jan Szyszko

Minister of the Environment of Poland



Born in 1944. In 1966 graduated from the Faculty of Forestry of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Doctor of forest sciences since 1972. In 1983 Jan Szyszko received the PhD title, followed by the Professor title in 2001.

Director of the Polish Board of National Parks in 1992-1993.

Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry in 1997-1999. Between 1999 and 2001 he acted as the Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, plenipotentiary of the Government of the Republic of Poland for the UN Convention on Climate Change and President of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP5). Judge of the State Tribunal in 2001-2005. Minister of Environment in 2005-2007. Member of Parliament of the V, VI, VII and VIII term of the Polish Sejm. Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for

Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry, member of the Parliamentary

Committee for the European Union and Chairman of the Parliamentary Team for the Sustainable Development of Europe of the VII term of the Polish Sejm.

Author of more than 250 scientific publications in the field of forest ecosystems development, enhancing forest health, population size dynamics, forest system restoration and use of environmental resources, including for the economic development of the country. Professor Jan Szyszko is one of the founders and the President of the Association for Sustainable Development of Poland.

Vesna Kolar Planinšič



Ms. Kolar Planinšič is head of SEA division at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of Slovenia. She is an environmental expert, focusing on SEA, EIA and its transboundary context. She finished her degree in landscape architecture and an interdisciplinary master's program in Urban and Spatial Planning at the University of Ljubljana and further worked there as researcher. She also specialized at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and worked at the Institute for Natural and Cultural Heritage. She started her international work in 1996 as adviser to the minister for the Alpine Convention and Nature conservation (regarding EU's Natura 2000 and LIFE projects; and sustainable development) and was active member of the team preparing for entry into the EU and the OECD. She is a member of the EIA/SEA expert group at the European Commission and the Working Group on EIA and SEA of the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the Protocol on SEA; she also chaired the Espoo Implementation Committee (2011–2014). Over the years she has worked on various environment international activities in the EU, South Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, in the Mekong region, and the Middle East. She is lecturer at the University of Klagenfurt and the College for Sustainable Development in Ljubljana.

Jiri Dusik



Jiri Dusik holds an Engineering Degree from the Czech Technical University, Prague and has over 20 years of experience in integration of environmental issues into planning and policy-making processes. As a managing partner at Integra Consulting, he managed or supervised over 60 SEAs in 20 countries and was a member of the OECD/DAC Task Team on SEA. He e.g. co-authored the UNECE manual for the Practical Application of the SEA Protocol to the Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context (2007 and 2011) and the EC Guidance for Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into EIA and SEA (2014). Jiri was in 2007 honored with Individual Award by International Association for Impact Assessment in recognition of his outstanding contribution to development of SEA capacities in Eastern Europe and South Asia. In 2017, Jiri joined United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Vietnam as an international technical specialist for green growth.

Matthew Cashmore

Works as a senior lecturer in environmental assessment at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, Sweden. He conducts theoretically informed, but invariably highly policy relevant, research at the interfaces between environmental science,

political science and human geography. Matthew has undertaken research and policy assignments on environmental assessment and climate mainstreaming for a range of organisations, including: the UK Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, the World Bank, various European Union institutions, and the Nordic Climate Facility. He has also participated in numerous capacity development and training activities in Europe and beyond. Matthew has a PhD in environmental science from the School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, UK.

Mara Silina



Ms. Mara Silina is Co-chair of the European ECO Forum and independent expert. For more than 27 years she was working with environmental organisations in UNECE region on different programmes and projects, including NGO cooperation, networking, capacity building, lobbying, involvement in environmental policy making. Until April 2015, she was the European Environmental Bureau's EU Enlargement programme and Public Participation Campaign coordinator.

The main focus of her current activities is the UNECE environment related processes, including "Environment for Europe" and she is actively involved in the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (The Aarhus Convention) and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). Ms. Silina is an NGO observer to the PRTR Protocol, member of the International PRTR coordinating Group and the European ECO Forum Representative at the OECD PRTRs Task Force.

Mara Silina hold Masters Degree in chemistry/biochemistry and had also graduated the European Institute for Public Affairs and Lobbying.
