

Dear Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Excellencies, dear colleagues,

While Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Germany and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union, I would like to take this opportunity to make a few additional remarks on behalf of Slovakia. In these exceptional circumstances, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for all the extraordinary work and commitment of Lithuania and the Secretariat to organize this virtual Meeting of the Parties.

The Espoo Convention is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year. Today, more than ever before, it is possible to see how important and relevant it is to respect the principles of environmental impact assessment. The provisions of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context as well as its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment are fully reflected in our national legislation and we strive to apply them in practice.

Given the ever-evolving national, regional as well as global challenges, we consider it an important possibility for other states to take an interest and part in preparation of, proposed activities, plans and programs that are being carried out outside their territory and that are likely to cause a significant adverse impact on their environment. These commitments significantly contribute to the open exchange of information, mutual cooperation and increased transparency between states.

The Slovak Republic has included the principles of strategic environmental assessment into the new national Strategy for the Environmental Policy until 2030, adopted by the Government in 2019 that represents a cornerstone of our environmental policy-making.

I believe that sustainable socio-economic development in the long term can only be ensured through the application of principles based on the environmentally conscious and efficient use of natural resources. Therefore, it is essential to make sure that proposed activities and resources are in line with international environmental goals and commitments. One of the effective tools to meet this requirement is environmental impact assessment and respective principles that derive from the Espoo Convention and its Protocol. We shall not only be aware of the environmental responsibility that is linked to our decisions, but also ensure that it is fully respected and applied in practice.

I firmly believe that this meeting and the decisions we are taking here will lead us towards this direction.

Finally, let me congratulate you, Madam Chair for a successful meeting and consensual decision-making. Slovak republic reiterates its commitment to the Espoo Convention as well as to the Protocol and stands ready to contribute to its successful implementation. Thank you.