

Kiev Ministerial Conference
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Statement on the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
by

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Hellenic Republic
on behalf of the European Union and the Acceding countries

On behalf of the European Union, it gives me great pleasure to address this Extraordinary meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

By the targets set in the 6th Environmental Action Programme and the adoption of the Cardiff process of environmental integration, the EU has already noted the significance of the integration of environmental considerations into the early phases of the different sectoral policy processes.

Moreover, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy agreed by the Goteborg European Council in June 2001 emphasized the need to develop a new approach to policy-making and implementation that gives equal attention to all three pillars of sustainable development and strengthens the synergies between them.

In this context, the EU recognises the importance of the adoption and implementation in the UNECE Region of an environmental legally binding instrument for Strategic Environmental Assessment for the promotion of sustainable development and the achievement of a better future for our continent and its people.

We all recognise that the strategic environmental assessment for the integration of the environmental, including health, considerations in the development of plans and programmes and the consideration, to the extent appropriate, of the environmental, including health, concerns in the preparation of policies and legislation will not only offer a way to provide for a high level of protection of the environment, including health, in the UNECE Region but will also improve the coherence of the overall regional environmental framework.

The EU welcomes the adoption and the signature of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and appreciates all the work done by the Ad hoc Working Group for the Preparation of the Draft Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Draft Resolution.

As we all know, agreeing on an environmental legal text is one thing but full and consistent implementation is another.

As it is known, the EU has already adopted a legal instrument, a directive, for the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, that must be implemented by the end of July 2004. The experience gained during the period of preparation for the adoption and implementation of this directive can contribute a lot to the implementation of the Protocol.

Therefore the EU re-affirms its commitment to co-operate in the field of implementation of the Protocol in order to effectively promote environmental integration into other policy sectors and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UNECE Region.