

**6th Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context and the 2nd Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol
2 – 5 June 2014, Geneva, Switzerland
High-level segment
5 June 2014**

Intervention by Mr. Mihail Făcă, Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Romania

Dear Ministers,
Dear Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will begin by thanking the Espoo Convention Secretariat, as well as the UNECE staff, for the excellent practical arrangements of this event. It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to address the high-level session of the sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context. Environment does not recognize international borders as pollution or climate change therefore the Espoo Convention tools have become some of the most useful international tools to order to prevent transboundary pollution. The EIA Convention has influenced and will continue to influence not only other international instruments, including soft law ones, but also national legislation of countries outside the UNECE area.

As every Meeting of the Parties does, this 6th event has reconfirmed its value for bringing together all stakeholders involved in the transboundary EIA process and addressing key issues for not only continuing the implementation process but also for finding solutions to improve and promote the Espoo principles inside and, why not, outside the UNECE region.

I would like to take the opportunity and present some issues of particular importance to the Romanian Government:

Firstly, regarding implementation, a great deal of appreciation must be addressed to the Implementation Committee for all its work undertaken in order to provide advice on how to apply the EIA transboundary provisions.

Romania has been, in the intersessional period, a member of this Committee. The Romanian Government intends to increase its contribution to the Committee's activities, by providing it with additional resources in order to allow the Committee to fully exercise its functions.

The Committee is entering a new stage, where states once found in non-compliance try to address the findings of non-compliance. We should welcome this approach and, at the same time, understand that this means the Committee's task become more complicated. The Committee needs not only to assess whether the procedures under the Convention have been fulfilled but also whether this has been done in good faith. I expect the Committee to have a lot to do on this matter.

As I mentioned earlier, the Romanian Government strongly believes that the success of the Convention is to be achieved by fulfilling all its legal requirements in good-faith. The Romanian Government has continuously acted in good faith when implementing the Convention as well as

when taking the opportunity to share the experience on topics such as large scale energy projects or strategic environmental issues, in a transboundary context.

The implementation of Espoo Convention represents an important step towards the strengthening of the process of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection and it represents a significant extension in the area of democratic participation and greater public involvement in the decision-making process.

In relation to the SEA Protocol, we consider it a significant multilateral instrument for achieving sustainable development in the region which will prove to be an effective instrument, also for regional cooperation and thus contributing to trustful relations between neighbours.

In this context, I would like to refer to the Multilateral Agreement Among the Countries of South-Eastern Europe for implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context signed at Bucharest in 2011. This instrument goes further than the Convention, in terms of practical arrangements in order to strengthening the subregional EIA cooperation. The major objectives of the Agreement are to increase the cooperation in the South Eastern European (SEE) region, conducting EIA procedure in a transboundary context with neighbouring countries and exchanging useful experience with them, in order to prevent, reduce and control the adverse transboundary impact of certain activities on the environment with a view to ensuring ecologically sound and sustainable development.

Although most of the signatory states have ratified it, this important treaty has been given less consideration. For this reason, the Romanian Government intends to organize a seminar at the beginning of 2015 in Bucharest, where we will invite the representatives of South-Eastern European countries. The seminar will try to analyze the implementation of transboundary EIA procedures in the region, and the relevance of the Multilateral Agreement in this context. Later in the year, the Government of Romania will extend an invitation to the Parties and signatories of the Multilateral Agreement for a first meeting under this treaty.

Having gone through the international and regional perspectives, I will now turn to the bilateral ones. In this respect, I want to thank parties which have participated in transboundary EIAs initiated by Romania as well as those parties which have allowed Romania to participate in their transboundary procedures. As a next step the Romanian Government is currently preparing a draft bilateral agreement for the implementation of the Convention, which we intend to finalize during this summer.

And finally, at a national level, we are currently upgrading our transboundary environmental procedures database, in order to make it readily and easily accessible to the interested public.

I hope that all Parties will find the resources and willingness to face all the challenges raised by the application of the Convention, including non-compliance issues, in order to go further into the spirit of the Convention.

Once again I would like to express our thanks to all the people involved in organising this event, as well as to all participants for their active contributions.

Thank for your attention!