

Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Briefing on UNECE environmental treaties

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Espoo Convention

- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Adopted and signed in Espoo (Finland) in 1991
- Came into force in 1997, with 16 Parties
- Now has 45 Parties
- Supplemented by Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment



UNECE



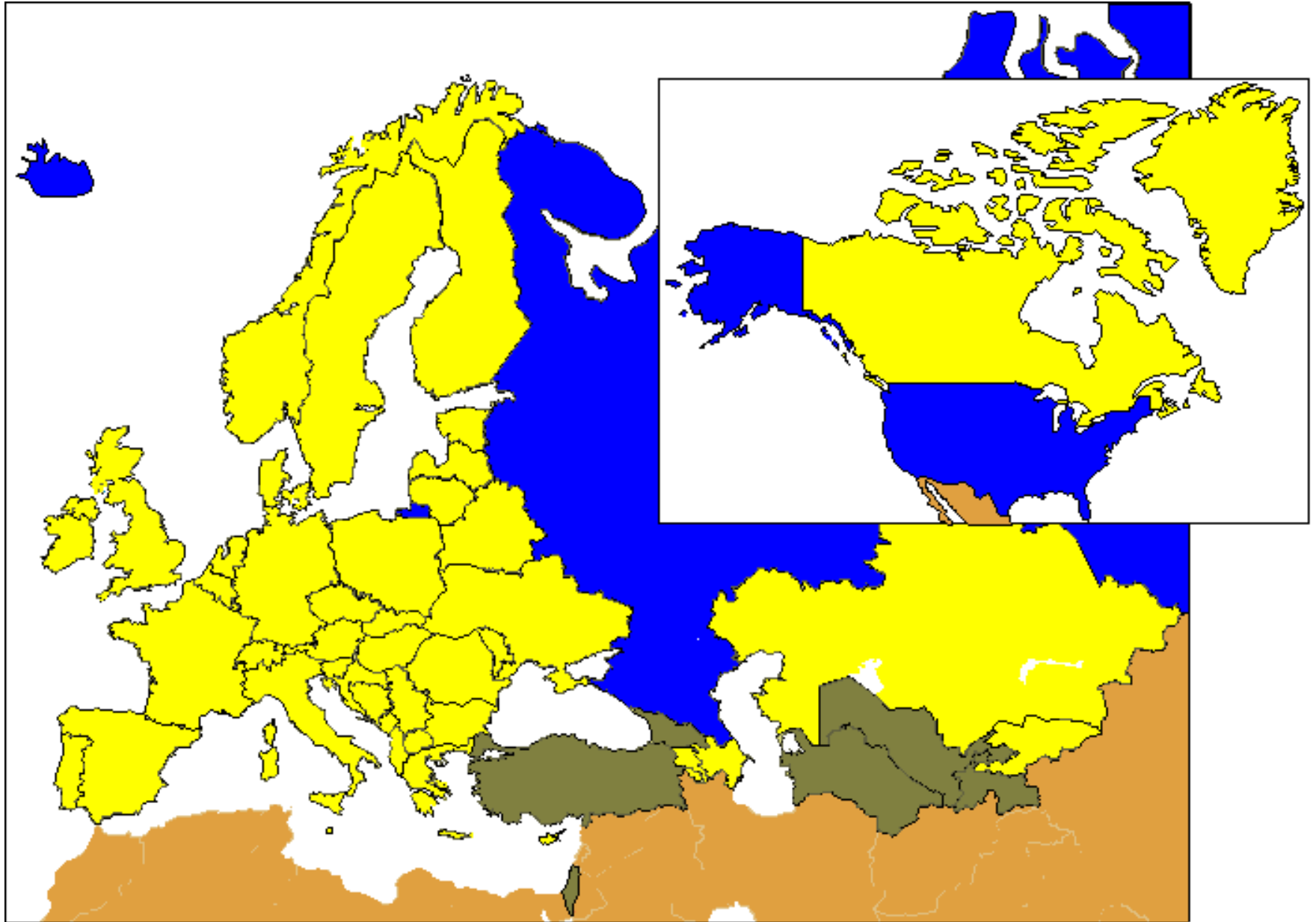
Parties



Signatories



other UNECE



<i>State</i>	<i>UNECE</i>	<i>Espoo</i>	<i>Caspian</i>
Kazakhstan	Yes	Party	Yes
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	Party	X
Tajikistan	Yes	-	X
Turkmenistan	Yes	-	Yes
Uzbekistan	Yes	-	X
Afghanistan	No	X	X
Azerbaijan	Yes	Party	Yes
China	No	X	X
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	No	X	Yes
Russian Federation	Yes	Signatory	Yes

Convention amended to open it to all Member States of the United Nations – amendment will perhaps come into force within 3 to 4 years

“Objectives”

- To enhance international co-operation in assessing environmental impact, in particular in transboundary context
- To give explicit consideration to environmental factors at early stage in decision-making process by applying environmental impact assessment
- To improve quality of information presented to decision makers so that environmentally sound decisions can be made paying careful attention to minimizing significant adverse impact, particularly in transboundary context

Procedure

- Requires Party to notify & consult on planned activity likely to have significant environmental impact across borders
- Requires preparation and sharing of assessment of environmental impacts
- Allows affected Parties – authorities & public – to comment on planned activities and on assessment of environmental impacts
- Provides for bilateral consultations between concerned Parties
- Party of origin makes final decision, taking into due account:
 - comments received (authorities & public of affected Party)
 - outcome of environmental impact assessment
 - outcome of bilateral consultations
- Final decision is sent to affected Party

Practical application

- Over 700 cases to date
- Common examples
 - Power plants: nuclear, coal, hydropower, gas, wind
 - Cross-border infrastructure: road, rail, power lines, pipelines
 - Mining, major quarries & on-site processing
- Examples include:
 - Mining in Kyrgyzstan
 - Hydropower development in Belarus
 - Port development in Republic of Moldova



Technical assistance



- Technical advice
 - Comprises review of current legislation, legal drafting
 - Used for Armenia (2008-9), Azerbaijan (2011), Tajikistan (2010), Ukraine (2009-...)
- Pilot projects
 - Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan (mining)
 - Belarus-Lithuania (hydroelectric power)
- Subregional cooperation workshops
 - Exchanges of experiences
 - Dialogue
- Guidance documents

Espoo Convention

- Widespread and widely used – useful
 - Sovereignty of decision-making
 - International cooperation
 - Better decisions
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- For more information:
 - eia.conv@unece.org
 - www.unece.org/env/eia

