



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 27 – 4-8 August 2003

Air Pollution Abatement in the UNECE Region: An Inter-sectoral Approach

For a quarter of a century, the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution has achieved consistent success in the reduction of air emissions in the UNECE region through a combination of scientific research and cooperation, integrated assessment modelling, and the development of emission reduction strategies on regional air pollution and its effects.



Questionnaire on Strategies and Policies on Air Pollution Abatement, Parties to the Air Pollution Convention were asked to describe the most important measures in their countries to reduce the pollutants covered by the Convention and its Protocols, and, in particular, whether environmental policy was

To assist the 49 Parties in complying with mandatory reporting obligations under the Convention and its Protocols, a biennial questionnaire asks countries to describe their national policies and programmes in place to tackle problems of air pollution. Integration of decision-making in key sectors that determine levels of air pollution can go a long way towards strengthening preventive and control measures. In the 2002

integrated into the strategies and planning of other national policies (e.g. economic, energy, fiscal, industrial, nature and conservation, spatial planning, transport, water and waste). The following is summarized from the replies by Parties to the Questionnaire; the original replies are available in full on the Convention's Website: <http://www.unece.org/env/eb/welcome.html>

Integration of environmental policies with other policies: Transport, Energy, Industry and Agriculture

Transport policy: modal shift, electric cars, public transport and low-sulphur fuels

In an effort to reduce emissions, many countries in the UNECE region promote efficient modes of transport that do not rely on the use of sulphur-rich fuels. The Czech Republic and Latvia use cycle tracks and other measures to promote cycling. Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland and others try to encourage a modal shift: from freight transport by road to rail. Other countries impose taxes on heavy-duty vehicle use, for example, Germany imposed a road toll on heavy goods transport by trucks. A programme in Estonia aims to tackle air quality issues through transport policy by an operative redirection of traffic flows. Many countries, for example Finland and Switzerland, also have

financial assistance schemes that support public transport. Canada provides tax incentives for ethanol-blended fuel to increase its market share; the long-term goal is for the ethanol market to be self-sustaining. Many countries also promote the use of electric vehicles and vehicles that use cleaner fuels. Austria subsidizes the installation of solar collectors and heat pumps and the purchase of electric vehicles. Norway provides tax subsidies to stimulate the use of electric cars including exemption from the sales tax, value-added tax, exemption from road toll charges and the annual vehicle tax.

Energy policy: Fuel standards, renewable resources and energy conservation

Energy policies that aim to reduce the emissions of harmful air pollutants include raising fuel quality

standards and promoting energy conservation, as well as the development of alternative forms of

Not an official record - For information only

energy. Canada and Estonia have programmes aimed at capturing and re-using harmful by-products of energy production. Canada's CO₂ Capture and Storage Initiative aims to capture CO₂ from utility filling material. Austria and Latvia, among others, promote alternative sources of energy. Austrian law stipulates that, by 2007, 4% of energy must be provided by wind, biomass, biogas or solar forms of energy. Latvia has a programme on the production and use of biofuels, to assess the possibility of

sources, which is then treated and transported for underground storage. Estonia uses oil-shale processing waste in road, railroad and dam construction and as construction gravel and producing petrol-bioethanol mix, rapeseed oil and biogas. To promote renewable energy in Belgium, Flanders introduced a system of green electricity certificates where electricity distributors must show that a certain percentage of electricity is produced with renewable energy sources.

Industrial policy: clean production, financial incentives and eco-labelling

The most popular strategy for integrating industrial and environmental policies aims to increase awareness of clean production. Kazakhstan has tried to do this by establishing cleaner production centres that target the oil, mining and metallurgy sectors; they aim to increase awareness of environmental responsibility and build capacity to improve environmental performance. Many countries offer grants or subsidies to industries as an incentive to reduce emissions. Cyprus has a

grant programme, as does the Czech Republic, which subsidizes up to 50% of the cost of introducing environmental management systems according to ISO 14001 or the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Many countries (including the Czech Republic and Hungary) have established eco-labelling programmes that promote awareness and pressure industry to improve environmental performance and reduce emissions.

Agricultural policy: crop production for energy, reduced reliance on fertilizers

While many countries have policies that integrate agricultural and environmental goals, one notable policy comes from the Czech Republic, where a

strategy has been developed to produce crops for energy-production purposes. The main goal of this programme is partly to replace the combustion of fossil fuels and partly to preserve the cultural landscape and the character of rural areas. Many countries, including Austria and Germany, promote organic farming, to reduce energy demand and pesticide use. Estonia has developed a plant protection system that aims to educate farmers on agricultural management techniques that increase the efficiency of the land and reduce the reliance on fertilizers and pesticides.

* * * * *

The above excerpt will be published in the forthcoming UNECE publication: **2002 Review of Strategies and Policies for Air Pollution Abatement in the ECE Region.** For more information, contact Brinda Wachs brinda.wachs@unece.org

Facts and figures:

Regular daily smokers, 15 years and over

selected UNECE countries

	Year	Percentage	
		Women	Men
European Union:			
Austria	1997	18.7	29.6
Belgium	2000	26.0	36.0
Denmark	2000	29.0	32.0
Finland	2001	19.7	28.8
France	2000	21.0	33.0
Germany	2000	22.3	34.7
Greece	2000	29.0	46.8
Ireland	2000	31.0	32.0
Italy	1999	17.3	32.8
Luxembourg	2000	26.0	34.0
Netherlands	2000	29.3	36.2
Portugal	2000	7.9	29.3
Spain	2000	27.2	44.9
Sweden	2001	19.9	17.9
United Kingdom	2000	25.0	29.0
Other Western Europe:			
Andorra	1997	28.0	43.7
Cyprus	2000	7.2	42.5
Iceland	2001	22.8	24.5
Malta	1995	7.3	16.1
Norway	2001	30.8	30.9
Switzerland	1997	24.4	36.3
North America:			
Canada	2001	15.9	20.2
United States a/	2000	21.0	25.7

Sources: UNECE Statistical Division, based on data from the Health For All database, WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Notes:

a/ Refers to 18 years and over.

For further information please contact:

**Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland**

**Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44
Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05**

**E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
Web site: <http://www.unece.org>**