

## **POLICY STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL PLANNING OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

Dear Mr. Chairman, Dear Colleagues Ministers, Heads of Delegations,

I have the special honour, in a position of a Minister in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia responsible for the area of environment and physical planning and Head of Delegation, to express our appreciation to the organizers of the Second Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in Trans-boundary Context, (EIA Convention, Espoo, 1991), the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters, the Secretariat of the Convention and, certainly donors who facilitated the implementation of this meeting.

I am also especially honoured to be able to congratulate you all the Tenth Anniversary of the Convention, and wish the Secretariat a successful work in the coming period and accomplishment of all tasks delivered in the period behind us.

The Republic of Macedonia has initiated the procedures for ratification of the EIA Convention in the middle of 1998, becoming a full Party thereto in August 1999.

I would like to point out that our Country had been following actively the Convention in the period preceding its ratification, participated in the workshops and meetings organized by the Secretariat, making its contribution in drafting and defining of series of documents in individual areas, representing its integral part. By the act of ratification, we acquired a real opportunity to participate as a full Party in the work of the bodies of the Convention, and we used that opportunity to input our own experiences in the relevant papers, developed during the period between the two meetings of Parties (1998-2001).

The implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Macedonia is a continuous process, with its roots in the period preceding its ratification. Namely, in December 1996, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Law on Environment and Nature Protection and Improvement, incorporating the principles and obligations related with environmental impact assessment. For the purpose of comprehensive elaboration of the segment concerning EIA, the bodies of the competent Ministry initiated the procedure for drafting a separate Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, to include also aspects of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, as well as aspects of transboundary environmental impact assessment. The draft of this Law has been developed with the assistance of EC experts in the framework of the Phare Programme. We expect this draft Law to be upgraded and approximated with Agenda 21, Article 17 of the Rio Declaration, endorsed documents of the EU in the field of EIA and provisions of the Convention.

In the framework of the bilateral cooperation, we have concluded agreements for cooperation with our neighbours – Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Greece, Republic of

Albania, while the procedure for conclusion of an Agreement for Understanding with the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is underway. The said agreements are framework ones, covering all domains of the environment, and also providing for the possibility to conclude separate agreements in specific areas, as well as for the possibility of joint environmental monitoring and timely information of the Parties, which is also a tendency of the EIA Convention.

Bilateral cooperation has been implemented through concrete projects as well, such as: with the Republic of Greece, Monitoring Stations on the River of Vardar/Axios, with the Republic of Albania, Lake Ohrid Conservation Project, and, through the proposed projects within the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Program for South Eastern Europe (REReP) we will strengthen the regional cooperation in the area of environment.

On this occasion, I would like to underline my positive opinion on the work of the Secretariat, that has managed to fulfill the requirements laid down by the Ministers in the period between Oslo and Sofia, translating them into documents with regard we, here in Sofia, will take decisions.

I am honoured to give my vote for the Declaration, that will come out from this meeting, because I am aware that it will be a document that will provide for a more successful implementation of the Convention in the coming period.

And, finally, I would like to extend the commitment that the Republic of Macedonia, within its capabilities, will follow the principles layed down in the Convention and incorporate them in its national legislation, be a promoter of successful bilateral and sub-regional cooperation in the Region and make its contribution to the achievement of the main objectives of the Convention.

I call upon the developed countries to take greater part in the implementation of the Work Plan for the period to the Third Meeting of the Parties, particularly by providing financial and expert assistance for the countries in transition and non-Parties to the Convention.

With respect and wish for further successful work,

Marjan Dodovski,  
Minister of Environment and Physical Planning  
of the Republic of Macedonia and Head of Delegation

