

Latest news!

Portugal became the 16th Party to the Convention to ratify the Gothenburg Protocol on 16 February. The Protocol will therefore enter into force on 17 May 2005.

Welcome to issue 1 of **Clearing the Air**, a newsletter bringing you the latest about the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. Our plans are to include short articles about the Convention's work and the people doing it as well as giving information on past and forthcoming events.

You may be surprised to learn that the idea of a Convention newsletter is not new. NILU started "Monitair", a newsletter on monitoring activities under the Convention, in 1988. This continued at least into the early 1990s and a few copies of these early newsletters still exist. Some of the authors of that time are familiar names - Harald Dovland wrote the first article "Why another newsletter?" and Merete Johannessen (now Merete Ulstein) wrote about ICP Waters.

The communications strategy workshop held in 2003 also flagged up the need for a newsletter. Now, with the 25th anniversary celebrations behind us, we have time to plan our future work and consider new ventures. We thought the time was right to start a newsletter once again, this time for all work under the Convention. Here is the first attempt.

This issue brings you information on December's Executive Body session and 25th anniversary event. We report on a recent workshop at IIASA, a meeting of the Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues and the Task Force meeting of ICP Vegetation that all took place recently. We also introduce you to the secretariat team as well as drawing attention to other information you may find of interest.

But remember!! This is the Convention's newsletter and it is not just the secretariat that can contribute. We welcome articles and pictures from any of our

the readers, especially from those closely involved with Convention's work, such as the programme centres and officers of the Convention's bodies. And if you would like information circulated about the Convention's meetings or results of its work, please let us know. We shall be prompting some of you in the near future to make sure we have enough material for the next issue.

The number and frequency of our issues is flexible. We believe we can manage 3-4 per year. But if you provide us with sufficient contributions we can circulate issues even more frequently.

And don't forget to give us some feedback. Tell us what you like, what you don't like and what you think we should add to **Clearing the Air**. We look forward to hearing from you (contact us at air.env@unece.org).



UN documents now available to all

The official document system (ODS) of the United Nations has been opened to the general public. It covers all types of official UN documents worldwide, including many UNECE documents such as our Executive Body (EB) reports. Comprehensive coverage starts in 1993. The system can be accessed directly (no password needed) at <http://documents.un.org>.

Introducing the secretariat.....



*Back row: Alben Karadjova, Keith Bull, Margaret Muindi
Front row: Marichu Cardenas, Matti Johansson, Brinda Wachs*

Many of you will know some of us, some of you will know all of us, but here we are, the secretariat for the Convention, with a brief description of our various roles and responsibilities.

Albena is secretary to the EMEP Steering Body, the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the Implementation Committee. She also looks after the Task Force on POPs, the Expert Group on Particulate Matter, the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling and the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling. Albena's special interest is in EECCA country activities.

Keith is secretary to the Executive Body. He has overall responsibility for the air pollution work in the Division as well as overseeing work on the UNECE Water Convention and the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention. His special interest is in outreach activities to organizations outside UNECE and its region.

Margaret works with Albena and Brinda looking after secretarial and admin tasks associated with their work and those of the bodies they serve. So she deals with arrangements for the EMEP Steering Body and Working Group on Strategies and Review sessions and prepares and submits their documents for translation.

Marichu works with Keith and Matti to support their work and that of the Executive Body and the Working Group on Effects. As well as the secretarial and admin tasks, Marichu does many of the web site updates and manages the Convention's correspondence, ratification notifications, etc.

Matti is secretary to the Working Group on Effects. He has responsibility for the air pollution effects work in UNECE and looks after the work of the ICPs (International Cooperative Programmes) of the Working Group and supports their task forces. As well as effects issues Matti has a special interest in integrated assessment modelling.

Brinda is secretary to the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections, the Task Force on Heavy Metals, the Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues and the Expert Group on Ammonia Abatement. She is responsible for reported emissions and for the questionnaire on strategies and policies for air pollution abatement.

In addition to those who regularly service the air pollution work, we would also like to introduce other important people in UNECE.

Caroline Lambein is our Division's editor. She makes sure that our official documents meet UN standards, are understandable and easy to read, as well as providing us with guidance on the proper use of language.



Kaj Bärlund is Director of our Division (Environment and Human Settlements). He is responsible for all 5 of UNECE's environment conventions as well as environmental and human settlements activities in general in UNECE.



The Executive Secretary of UNECE, **Mrs Brigita Smögnerová**, is Under-Secretary-General of the UN and oversees all of UNECE's activities.

Twenty-second session of the Executive Body

EB22 took place on 29 November to 3 December last year with a special one-day event (see below) on 1 December to celebrate the Convention's 25th anniversary.

In addition to its regular agenda items the EB agreed to adjust the annex to the 1994 Oslo Protocol, by adding Cyprus to the list of Parties and listing its emissions for the base year and target years. The secretariat has now informed Parties of the change so, after the required 90-day delay, Cyprus can accede to the Protocol.

The EB also considered the future direction of the Convention taking account of events held in 2004: the seminar held for EECCA (Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian) countries by the Working Group on Strategies and Review; the Gothenburg workshop on strategies for air pollution policy; the 3rd International Nitrogen Conference in Nanjing and the declaration made by its participants; and the global forum of air pollution agreements and networks that met in London in August. After a wide-ranging discussion the Executive Body decided on several lines of action including: the need to look further into the barriers to ratification of Protocols; to ask its subsidiary bodies to consider the outputs from the various workshops and conferences when developing their future work; the need for more focus on help to EECCA countries including the suggestion to prepare protocol implementation guides in Russian and hold annual workshops in the region. It also decided to set up a new Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution that will report to the Steering Body of EMEP (see below).

The Executive Body session was also the first meeting of the Parties to the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals that entered into force at the end of 2003. The Parties initiated action on reviewing the Protocol and the Executive Body set up a new Task Force to do the technical work for the review (see below).

A third new group, the Expert Group on Particulate Matter, was set up by the Executive Body following an initiative by the German Government, supported by the European Community (see below).

At the end of its session the Executive Body re-elected Harald Dovland (Norway) as its Chair for 2005 and re-elected Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Heinz-Detlef Gregor (Germany), Patrick Széll (UK), Jürgen Schneider (Austria) and Peggy Farnsworth (Canada) as Vice-Chairs. It also elected Andrzej Jagusewicz (Poland) and Martin Williams (UK) as Vice Chairs. It agreed the European Community be invited to appoint an observer (Matti Vainio) to attend Bureau meetings. It also thanked Lars

Lindau (Sweden) and Ivan Mojik (Slovakia) for their valuable contributions to the Bureau's work in past years.



Delegates to the Executive Body session have a busy week of decision making and planning for the future.

25th anniversary special event

The Executive Body's special anniversary event took place on the 1 December in Geneva. All those involved with the Convention's work were invited and many representatives of programme centres, task forces and expert groups attended. We were also pleased to see many past officers of Convention bodies and members of the secretariat. Mrs Brigita Schmögnerová, Executive Secretary of UNECE, and Mr Philippe Roch, Secretary of State for the Environment, Switzerland, welcomed participants. A series of short presentations by those involved with the Convention both now and in the past, provided delegates with an overview of the work being done and a vision for the future. More information and copies of the presentations are available on the Convention's web site

(www.unece.org/env/lrtap/25%20anniversary.htm).



The Executive Secretary of UNECE, Mrs Brigita Schmögnerová, opens the special event. With her at the opening presentations are (from left to right): Kaj Bärlund, Director UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division; Harald Dovland (Norway), Chair of the Executive Body; Philippe Roch (Switzerland), Secretary of State for the Environment; Bill Harnett (United States) of the US EPA; Jacqueline McGlade Executive Director, European Environment Agency; and Peter Gammeltoft of the European Commission.

New Task Forces and Experts Groups

Task Force on Heavy Metals. Led by Germany and Chaired by Dieter Jost, the Task Force will hold its first meeting on 16-18 March 2005 in Berlin. The first priority is the review of emission limit values (ELVs) for chlor-alkali plants and from mercury-containing emissions from medical waste incineration; the Protocol requires Parties to finish this work by the end of 2005. Experts will also tackle the review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Protocol and consider whether additional metals to cadmium, lead and mercury or if any new products or product groups should be covered by the Protocol. Further information at www.unece.org/env/hm or contact Brinda.Wachs@unece.org.

Expert Group on Particulate Matter. This group, led by Germany and the United Kingdom, will hold its first meeting on 23-25 May in Berlin, back to back with the meeting of the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling. Marion Wichmann-Fiebig (Germany) and Martin Meadows (UK) have been nominated as Chairs. The Expert Group will consider what further action might be taken for the control of emissions of particles, for example should they be included in a new or existing protocol. Further information at www.unece.org/env/pm or contact Albena.Karadjova@unece.org.

Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution. This Task Force will build on previous workshops held under the Convention. Led by the United States and the European Community, the Task Force will hold its first meeting on 1-3 June. Terry Keating (United States) and André Zuber (European Community) have been nominated Co-Chairs. Parties are nominating their experts whilst the Co-Chairs will invite other experts giving particular encouragement to scientists outside the region, as requested by EB. The Task Force will consider what future work is needed and prepare a draft work-plan for submission to the EMEP Steering Body in September. Further information available at www.unece.org/env/htap or contact Keith.Bull@unece.org.

Task Force of ICP Vegetation meets in Spain

Seventy vegetation experts met in Almeria, Spain for the 18th Task Force meeting of the International Cooperative Programme (ICP) Vegetation. The main issues for discussion were ozone and heavy metals. For ozone,

progress in mapping critical levels and exceedances was reported, including early results of uncertainty analysis.



The Task Force of ICP Vegetation met at the University of Almería (from left: Fernando Dianez, Monsterrat Fernández from the Ministry of the Environment, Benjamin Gimeno and Harry Harmens, Chair of the Task Force).

In addition, the Task Force heard about a new framework for mapping ozone impact on (semi-)natural vegetation; ozone-sensitive communities were identified for northern/north west Europe and mapping and classification approaches were proposed. In 2004 ozone leaf injury was again observed across many ICP monitoring sites. The Task Force agreed to conduct another European heavy metals in mosses survey in 2005/6 with perhaps 30 countries participating. The finalized manual for the survey now includes a recommendation to determine nitrogen concentrations in the mosses collected. For more on ICP Vegetation visit www.unece.org/env/wge/vegetation.htm.



Excursion to greenhouses.

Workshop on RAINS review

On 20-21 January the Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling at IIASA in Austria hosted a workshop on the recent review of its RAINS integrated assessment model. Attended by 80 experts, the workshop assessed the results of the review, which was carried out as a collaborative exercise with the European Commission's Clean Air for Europe (CAFE) programme. Both the Convention's work and that of CAFE rely heavily on RAINS for developing abatement strategies to apply to protocols and directives. It was reported that the group of peer reviewers concluded that RAINS was an indispensable, scientifically relevant tool. However, they suggested it would benefit by further work on, for example, particulates modelling, dynamic modelling of ecosystem change, interactions with greenhouse gas mitigation and uncertainty analysis. For more information, consult www.iiasa.ac.at/rains/meetings/. The EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Strategies and Review in September will receive a report on the workshop in September.

Seventh meeting of the Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues (EGTEI)

EGTEI held its seventh meeting in Laxenburg (Austria) on 19 January 2005, back to back with the RAINS workshop (see above). The purpose was to assess progress with ECODAT, the Expert Group's techno-economic database. ECODAT holds data on control technologies and reference installations, as well as economic variables. These are important for deriving cost curves for pollution controls. The RAINS model uses the data to assess the cost-efficiency of abatement measures, and the Expert Group discussed ways to cooperate with the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling. The Expert Group has welcomed industry to participate in its work to obtain better assessments of costs of measures across sectors. Parties are also encouraged to nominate experts to the Group in future. The Expert Group will hold its eighth meeting on 6 June 2005 in Rome. For more information, consult:

<http://www.unece.org/env/tei/welcome.htm>

New publications

Clearing the Air - 25 years of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

With just a few days to spare the ambitious Dutch project to produce a book on the Convention was finished in time for the 25th anniversary celebrations in December. Hard work by the 60-strong team, the sterling efforts of Johan Sliggers and Willem Kakebeeke, and a quick turn round by the UN printers ensured the deadline was met.

With forewords by both the UN Secretary-General and the UNECE Executive Secretary, the book has a high profile both within the Convention and the UN as well as outside. Chapters of the book describe all aspects of the Convention's work past and present as well as possibilities for the future. These are seen through the eyes of those who have been delegates, officers of the Convention's bodies and members of its secretariat. It is an essential read for all those who want to know more about how the Convention evolved as well as how it works now and why. In the coming weeks the secretariat will distribute copies to all those interested. If you would like us to send you one, please contact us at air.env@unece.org providing your full postal address.

A new brochure

Those of you attending the Executive Body session will have seen the new brochure for the Convention. Produced by the Canadian government it is available from the secretariat in English, French and Russian.

Handbook for the Convention

We now have a Handbook for the Convention. As yet only available in English, the Handbook has the texts of all the Protocols and the Convention. It also has many of the important decisions taken by the EB and the Ministerial Declarations made at special occasions in the past. We hope this will be a useful reference work for all those involved with the Convention. Copies are available from the secretariat (air.env@unece.org).

