

THE PEP

Transport, Health
and Environment
Pan-European Programme



UNECE



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR
Europe

Strengthening the integration of health and environmental aspects into transport policies in Central Asian countries

Almaty, Kazakhstan 20-21 November 2018

I. Introduction

The “Strengthening the integration of health and environmental aspects into transport policies in Central Asian countries” workshop was organized under the auspices of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP).

The THE PEP Steering Committee, at its fifteenth session (Geneva, 6-8 November 2017), requested the secretariat to investigate the possibility of holding a capacity-building activity in Central Asia for the five countries in the region as part of the preparations for the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Vienna, October 2019).

The event was organized in cooperation with the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kazakhstan and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). It aimed to target policy-makers from the transport, health and environmental sectors at national and regional levels.

II. Participation

The event was attended by participants from: Kazakhstan (Ministry of Energy; Center of Public Health Care; Ministry for Investments and development; Akimat of Almaty); Kyrgyzstan (State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Transport and Roads); Tajikistan (Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population; Committee Environmental Protection) and Turkmenistan (State Committee for Environmental Protection and Land Resources).

Speakers, Chair and moderators represented: France (Ministry for Solidarity and Health); Norway (Institute of Transport Economics) the Russian Federation (Scientific and Research Institute of Motor Transport); UNDP Kazakhstan; the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe; ECE and the Public Fund "Velofriends" of the city of Almaty. Representatives of ECE serviced the meeting.

III. Objectives and organization of the meeting

A. Objectives

The objective of the event was to strengthen capacities of national authorities of countries in Central Asia on integrating THE PEP, its Priority Goals and tools in national policies.

In particular, the event focused on experiences, good practices and challenges related to the achievement of two THE PEP Priority Goals:

(a) Goal 3 - to protect health and reduce emissions of transport-related greenhouse gases, air pollution and noise (connected to Sustainable Development Goals 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” and 13, “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”); and

(b) Goal 5 - to integrate transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies (connected to Sustainable Development Goal 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”).

Finally, a feedback session at the end of the event was to allow Central Asian countries to identify their specific needs and provide input to the preparation of the High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment.

B. Organization of the meeting

The two-day workshop consisted in presentations from speakers and representatives of countries, followed by work in groups.

The group work focused on Priority Goal 3 on day one and on Priority Goal 5 on day 2. On both days, the rapporteur of each group summarized the results of discussions to the plenum. This was followed by discussions in plenary, with the involvement of other speakers and moderators.

At the end of the second, and last day, the participants, under the guidance of the Chair, discussed the contribution from the workshop to the High-level Meeting.

IV. Main conclusions from group works and following discussion

A. Situation in the countries and issues raised under Priority Goal 3

Participants identified described the situation and issues, when discussing Priority Goal 3:

(a) Representatives of the four countries present observed that there was a problem with air pollution in their countries due to transport and to other problems as household heating;

(b) The countries were working on changing the fleet of vehicles circulating in their roads, including fleets of public vehicles;

(c) Some of them were preparing strategic documents aiming at emission reduction;

(d) A bad urban planning – often not considering the geographical situation of a city is often an additional cause for pollution;

(e) Traffic pollution remained a big problem for the countries. Old fleets have an impact on that, which is worsened by the use of bad fuel;

(f) The countries were working to introduce or increase electrification (including of rail transportation – as some locomotive are still functioning on coal combustion). Initial investment had also started for electric public transportation.

Participants also identified needs to overcome the situation above. They highlighted that there should be:

(a) A stronger enforcement of legislation imposing cleaner fuels;

- (b) A commitment to implement international treaties (as the Protocols to the ECE Convention the Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution)
- (c) A legal framework, also at international level, that would allow supporting changes in policies;
- (d) More coordination among the three sectors at national and local level;
- (e) More funding to carry out initiatives and implement policies on pollution reduction, in particular the one deriving from transport;
- (f) More actions to make the population aware of the problems linked to air pollution and accepts the measures undertaken;
- (g) A more effective network of public transport;
- (h) The promotion of electric cars and public transport – and making available the infrastructure to charge the batteries;
- (i) Raising awareness of local authorities of the need to control traffic in cities and the links to health and environment.

B. Situation in the countries and issues raised under Priority Goal 5

Participants identified the following situation and issues, when discussing Priority Goal 5 and, in particular, their countries:

- (a) Were at different stages of promulgating legislation to regulate noise and air emissions. Some of the measures also included introducing speed limits and fees for older vehicles;
- (b) Had, in some cases, issued legislation covering environment and transport together. In some cases, such measures were linked to broader strategies as greening the economy;
- (c) Had started to include mitigation measures when pollution picks were reached. Examples were: limiting car use in the city-centre. In some cases, such measures became part of a long-term strategy to create city centres less devoted to car-use;
- (d) Are starting to promote cycling – for instance, by introducing cycling days;
- (e) Were planning to introduce the practice of monitoring pollution emissions;
- (f) Were introducing measures to decrease transport pollution in cities such as: reconstructing motorways and introducing electrified railways, introducing cycling lanes when planning new roads, avoiding cargo in cities and introducing more projects to promote cycling (often also as part of tourist-promoting strategies), introducing new fleets for public transport;
- (g) Had issues with transportation to link rural areas and rural areas to big cities.

Participants also identified needs to overcome the situation above. They highlighted that:

- (a) A coherent and complementary distribution of roles and responsibilities in member states on integrating sustainable transport planning into land-use planning was needed. The central/national levels need to have an overall strategy. The regional/local levels need to adapt the national strategy to their communities. The central/national levels need to harmonize the local strategies with international standards and with neighbouring countries;

(b) Regulations on land-use planning need to be reviewed by integrating the idea of sustainable transport. Flows modelling could help in that. Global good practices could also be used in this respect;

(c) When planning cities, services should be easily reachable to limit long-transport needs. In addition, the planning should include parking, green spaces and areas for the use of citizen and to support limiting pollution;

(d) When revising land-use and city planning, authorities also should pay attention to the use of the places by vulnerable groups and pedestrian. In some instances, a small difference in planning could change the use of a road. Participants heard the example of introducing more lighting in a road increased the use by women, who felt safer.

(e) Cities should build more cycling lanes, to promote cycling.

V. Elements to contribute to the High-level Meeting and recommendations for the High-level Meeting:

The participants, supported by the Chair, identified the following elements to contribute to the High-level Meeting and recommendations to it.

A Related to Priority Goal 3

Participants concluded that:

(a) The characteristics of running fleets and fuel in use should be improved. In this respect, the implementation of UNECE norms and standards could support countries. Should these norms and standards be followed, they would support the creation of a level playing field for the industries located in these countries, as they would need to use the same standards of Western countries;

(b) The old fleet (of private cars and public transport vehicles) needs to be renovated;

(c) Governments should support the use of non-motorized modes of transport, support public transport and increase the quality of the services;

(d) Central governments should provide a framework to support local entities to develop and implement strategies for providing information to the public and other stakeholders;

(e) Member States should be able to benefit from scientific research and studies so that policy decisions could be based on facts (e.g. researches on passengers' flow or simulations of different transport models). For this, data needs to be openly available;

(f) Countries should coordinate with other countries, especially neighbouring ones, on joint initiatives and should be launching parallel activities/actions. This would contribute to raise awareness of the press, stakeholders.

B Related to Priority Goal 5

Participants highlighted the following elements:

(a) Integration of transport and land-use planning is important for the quality of life and for the impact on environment;

(b) Sustainable development implies thinking on the impacts before planning and it doesn't mean that it always needs to include the development of infrastructures;

- (c) Legislation at national level should provide the framework to support policies, regulations and activities at local level;
- (d) Member States should be able to develop national programmes/plans on sustainable transport/mobility that create conditions for active mobility. They should and integrate a maintain a monitoring system in those plans;
- (e) Sustainable mobility plans in cities could be also started at company/industry level for the employees;
- (f) Local authorities should introduce a parking policy in cities that would allow less cars in specific areas. Parking fees could also be a way to generate additional revenues to be used for public transport;
- (g) Authorities should be able to assess the transport situation before issuing a building permits for new developments. Land-use regulations should further be enforced;
- (h) Electrification of private vehicles should not replace public transportation;
- (i) Land-use and transport planning should also keep into account the different groups in transport and land use planning (including elderly people);
- (j) Studies on quality of life, environmental impact etc. need to be the basis for decision-making in land-use and transport planning;
- (k) Member States should remember that new type of transport may radically change approaches to urban planning. This should also be reflected in the legislative framework.

C General recommendations

In the closing discussion, participants also raised elements and recommendations that cover an area that goes beyond Priority Goals 3 and 5 and that could apply to all THE PEP Priority Goals. Participants noted that:

- (a) More information sharing is needed on the impact of transport on environment and health. Studies and data should be collected and shared. Links with universities could be of help;
- (b) Policymakers often need to be reminded that sustainable transport policies can bring economic benefits. Member States should be aware of that and information should be explained in simple terms;
- (c) Countries, especially neighbouring ones, should consider launching initiatives in parallel. This would help to raise the awareness among policymakers and media of activities and initiatives undertaken to promote sustainable transport;
- (d) Media and social networks should be involved more to increase the visibility of the work carried out and to increase the awareness in the population. It would be useful also to support officers in national and local authorities to use social networks and media;
- (e) A mechanism that guarantees that the three ministries involved in THE PEP coordinate and cooperate in promoting sustainable transport would help the work at the level of policymakers. In addition, more information should be shared with mass media to raise the relevance of the topic;
- (f) The existence of a legal and policy framework at international level would support the work at national level to implement policies on transport, health and environment.

VI. Conclusions

Participants expressed appreciation for the workshop. They highlighted that THE PEP should continue the practice of organizing regional seminars, especially with more targeted topics.

Even more targeted sessions could be organized at national level, at the invitation of member States. Such sessions should be organized in cooperation with local and regional actors as UNDP, CAREC and other stakeholders involved in the various topics.

The Chair concluded thanking the participants, the organizers and co-organizers and inviting the representatives of member States to raise awareness on THE PEP and on the upcoming High-level Meeting in their countries.
