

Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Managing THE PEP:  
Communication strategy**

## **Status report on THE PEP Clearing House**

**Prepared by the secretariat**

### *Summary*

At its eleventh session, the Steering Committee was informed about the status of THE PEP Clearing House. In light of the continued support towards THE PEP Clearing House expressed in the Paris Declaration (para. 9), this document reviews the current state of affairs of THE PEP Clearing House. The Committee may wish to review its role and function over the longer term and consider measures to ensure adequate resources.

## **I. Background and usage**

1. During the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment that was held from 14 to 16 April 2014 in Paris, hosted by the Government of France and under the auspices of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), member States signed the Paris Declaration that lays out their vision for the achievement of sustainable and healthy urban transport and mobility.

2. One of the elements of this vision includes THE PEP Clearing House. The Paris Declaration recognized its importance and assigned to it additional functions, as part of the new THE PEP Academy. Specifically, according to clause 9 of the Paris Declaration, the Member States:

*9. Undertake to launch THE PEP Academy linking science, policy and practice, as a new implementation mechanism that capitalizes on the achievements and experiences of THE PEP. The Academy will be a platform to strengthen capacities for integrated transport, health, environment and spatial planning, facilitating the uptake of new knowledge. It will be targeted to key stakeholders, including policy makers, civil servants, practitioners and academics. THE PEP Clearing House will support THE PEP Academy;*

3. THE PEP Clearing House has originally been set up to provide an Internet portal bringing together a range of policy, legal and scientific information, including good practices, on issues relevant to the transport, health and environment. It also aims to provide interactive facilities for the exchange of views and good practices on THE PEP implementation thereby representing a reference base and main platform for all actors and organs within the framework of THE PEP. In so doing, the Clearing House expects to address particularly the needs of EECCA and South Eastern European countries.

4. The overarching goals of THE PEP Clearing House are to:

- Promote, disseminate and exchange focused and comprehensive information and data on all topics relevant to the inter-relationship between transport, health and the environment;

- Address more particularly the needs of national and local authorities involved in the transport, health and environment sectors;
- Foster a flow of expert knowledge throughout the pan-European region, amongst other things by facilitating the dissemination of research and good practices to and from the EECCA countries and South-Eastern Europe, and by enabling access to Russian-speaking users.

5. Table 1 shows annual visits broken down by country (top 25) for 2013 and 2014 (January to November). Two observations stand out from the statistics. The first is the diversity of countries from which visits to the site originate. The second observation is the increased interest during the first 10 months of 2014, which exceeded total visits in 2013, something that could be attributed to the Fourth High Level Meeting and the Paris Declaration

Table 1

**Usage by country (top-25), 2013 and 2014 (January–November 2014)**

Sessions in 2013 (1 January -31 December 2013)			Sessions in 2014 (1 January - 1 November 2014)		
Country / Territory	Sessions	Per cent	Country / Territory	Sessions	Per cent
United Kingdom	556	10.17%	United States	644	11.78%
Russia	533	9.75%	United Kingdom	605	11.07%
United States	491	8.98%	India	429	7.85%
Switzerland	419	7.67%	Russia	348	6.37%
India	383	7.01%	Australia	277	5.07%
(not set)	265	4.85%	Netherlands	269	4.92%
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	186	3.40%	Malaysia	251	4.59%
Australia	167	3.06%	South Africa	202	3.70%
France	159	2.91%	France	192	3.51%
Malaysia	155	2.84%	Canada	159	2.91%
Ukraine	147	2.69%	Ukraine	132	2.41%
Canada	111	2.03%	Germany	115	2.10%
Belarus	110	2.01%	Nigeria	112	2.05%
South Africa	101	1.85%	Kenya	110	2.01%
Kazakhstan	94	1.72%	Philippines	106	1.94%
Germany	92	1.68%	Switzerland	96	1.76%
Philippines	67	1.23%	Kazakhstan	90	1.65%
Italy	66	1.21%	Spain	80	1.46%
Belgium	51	0.93%	Belarus	69	1.26%
Ireland	50	0.91%	(not set)	68	1.24%
Turkey	47	0.86%	Indonesia	63	1.15%
Latvia	35	0.64%	Singapore	62	1.13%
Austria	34	0.62%	Pakistan	61	1.12%
Netherlands	32	0.59%	Belgium	59	1.08%
China	30	0.55%	United Arab Emirates	55	1.01%
	5,466	100.00%		6,178	113.03%

## II. Organization and technical aspects

6. Information in THE PEP Clearing House is organised by topics structured in areas, categories and sub-categories in line with the priorities of THE PEP. In addition information is grouped more specifically into the following types: 'policy' documents,

'legislation', 'research and methods', 'case studies', 'indicators and data', 'capacity building' and 'funding' opportunities.

7. From a technical point of view, THE PEP Clearing House relies partly on internal resources and partly on external services. The internal resources consist mostly of UNECE servers which host all activity related to THE PEP Clearing House. In terms of support, UNECE regular budget staff provide occasional support to keep THE PEP Clearing House operational. During 2013, technical interventions, maintenance and upgrading undertaken by UNECE staff amounted to a total of 100 work hours.

8. Externally, THE PEP Clearing House relies on an external domain name and email address services. It also relies on a search platform that was developed about a decade ago and is largely considered as outdated. Yet, with its current architecture, the current site could not operate properly without this search platform. The annual cost of these services is as follows:

- LOGIKA Corporation (Chicago) - Fusionbot - Clearing House search engine: USD 2,400 per year
- AXONE(Genève) THE PEP website domain and redirection of emails: CHF 50 per year

### **III. Options and the way forward**

9. The proper functioning of the Clearing House requires two “pillars”. The first is substantive in nature and concerns the content of the Clearing house which is generated by its active users, and needs to be regularly maintained and updated to reflect changes in knowledge and policy (e.g. the new priority goal agreed in Paris). As such it does not fall under the purview of this paper. The second pillar is technical. Here there are a few options.

#### **Option 1: Business as usual.**

10. In this scenario the PEP Clearing House continues to operate on the same platform, with occasional patches from UNECE ISU to continue its operation. This is a low-cost option, at least in the short run. However it runs the risk that the site continues to remain increasingly outdated, thus impacting its ability to attract active users and making it increasingly complicated to run and maintain.

#### **Option 2: modernizing architecture**

11. This option would entail updating technology and improving technical options (search options, user-friendliness etc). Technically this solution would probably require bringing the management of the domain name and emails under UNECE, given that UNECE servers accommodate all current activity and store all information from the Clearing House.

12. This option would also entail the change of the outdated search platform and its migration to a modern platform. The advantages of the integration of the Clearing House in existing UNECE architecture is its modernization. On the cost side, the integration would incur annual savings, since there would no longer be a need to rely on external services for the running of the Clearing House. On the other hand a one-off investment to redesign the site and the way it operates would be needed. This one-off investment could probably provide an appropriate opportunity to also expand the functions of the site, to also address

the expressed decision of the Paris declaration to use the Clearing House as tool to support THE PEP Academy.

13. This option would also be strengthened by the systematic engagement of a Content Manager.

### **Option 3: expanding functions**

14. This option is an extended version of option 2. In addition to the integration of the Clearing House in existing UNECE architecture, it would entail providing additional services, for example in the direction of supporting the THE PEP Academy capacity-building activities and training modules. Further, complementary, services could include information dissemination and communication with users in the form of Newsletters and electronic forums. Furthermore, information resources, such as Databases and Statistics could be envisaged.

15. This option would require adequate resources for a full-time Content Manager, IT and software updates on top and above the one-off investment mentioned above.

## **IV. Conclusion**

16. In light of the conclusion of the Paris Declaration, which added further potential directions for the use of THE PEP Clearing House, the Steering Committee is invited to consider these alternative options and provide guidance on the next steps. These could include the development of cost estimates for the implementation of options 2 and 3 above, in order to assess the feasibility of the required investment into the Clearing House.

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