

## Decisions of the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Environmental Policy, 1-3 November 2023<sup>1</sup>

Agenda item	Decision
1	Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts the agenda for its twenty-eighth session (ECE/CEP/2023/1), taking into account the proposed timetable as presented in information paper No. 1/Rev.1.</li> </ul>
2	Outcomes of the work of the Bureau <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses appreciation to the Bureau for its good work in fulfilling the mandates assigned to it by the Committee.</li> </ul>
3	Sustainable development in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomes the information provided on the main developments at the regional level regarding the 2030 Agenda.</li> <li>• Welcomes the information provided on progress made by the multilateral environmental agreements managed by the Environment Subprogramme.</li> <li>• Underscores the importance of UNECE MEAs to foster implementation of the SDGs, mitigate and adapt to climate change, reduce disaster risks, prevent and reduce pollution, support the green energy transition and sustainable deployment of renewable energies, protect biodiversity and promote a circular economy.</li> <li>• Noting that implementation of SDG 16 will be reviewed next year, recognises that reporting on the environmental dimension of SDG 16 will be a significant challenge.</li> <li>• Calls upon member States which have not yet done so to accede or ratify UNECE environmental Conventions and their Protocols, in particular the Gothenburg, PRTR, SEA, Water and Health and Civil Liability Protocols.</li> <li>• Welcomes the growing accession to UNECE MEAs by countries outside the UNECE region. Also welcomes the growing interest and participation by countries outside the UNECE region in the work of UNECE MEAs, including in those not open at the global level.</li> <li>• Express appreciation for the many capacity building activities carried out under the MEAs which have contributed to their enhanced implementation. Notes, at the same time, that needs remain high, in particular in relation to governance and integration with other sectoral policies and measures.</li> <li>• Underlines the important role of the many partners engaged in the work of UNECE MEAs, including UN RC and UNCTs, to advance implementation at the national level.</li> <li>• Decides to actively promote the impact and results of UNECE MEAs at UNEA-6 and in the UN Summit of the Future.</li> <li>• Expresses concern for the prevalent lack of financial resources to support the work of the secretariat of UNECE MEAs. While mandated work has continuously increased, UN regular budget resources have stalled and voluntary resources are not sustainable nor predictable, with serious risks for the delivery of the secretariat's mandate.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Unedited version as adopted by the Committee on Environmental Policy on 3 November 2023

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses appreciation to Ms. Monika Linn, Principal Advisor to the Executive Secretary of ECE, for long fruitful cooperation under the Environment for Europe process and other matters of the Committee on Environmental Policy.</li> </ul>
4	Outcomes of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcomes the information provided on the outcomes of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe, including on strategic foresight and its possible application in ECE and CEP activities.</li> <li>Acknowledges the need for continuous efforts in order to gain bigger relevance for the ECE Member States and better complementarity with other activities within the ECE with the aim to enhance its contribution into the work of the Commission as a whole in assisting countries of the region in implementation of the Agenda-2030.</li> <li>Asks the secretariat to further reflect on how to develop/implement strategic foresight at the subprogramme level and prepare a proposal to be discussed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session (Geneva, 6–8 November 2024).</li> </ul>
5	Follow-up to the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference and preparation of the mid-term review of the Conference's main outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes note of the results of the survey on the Nicosia Conference which concluded the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- excellent organization and successful outcomes;</li> <li>- gratitude to Cyprus for its warm hospitality and efficient preparation of the Conference;</li> <li>- continuing relevance of the Environment for Europe process;</li> <li>- excellent work of the ECE secretariat in organizing the Conference;</li> <li>- strong appreciation to the role of partner organizations in organizing the Conference, in particular UNEP, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and WHO, from the United Nations system, but also the European Environment Agency, OECD, and the non-governmental organization, European ECO Forum;</li> </ul> </li> <li>Takes note of the information provided by the secretariat on the activities of the informal inter-agency coordination group on environmental assessments for Ukraine, encourages member States to consider providing financial and human resources to support the work of the group and invites the secretariat to present an updated information to the Committee at its next session.</li> <li>Asks the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to prepare a document proposing the scope, format and modalities for organizing the mid-term review, which could be discussed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session.</li> <li>Takes note of the information provided by UNEP on the International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure and their possible implementation at the regional level.</li> <li>Asks the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to prepare a document on implementation of a regionwide approach to sustainable infrastructure in the pan-European region by providing the basis for common goals, targets and criteria for policymaking, financing, performance monitoring and replicability of practices that best suit domestic and transboundary needs, to be discussed by the Committee at its twenty-ninth session.</li> </ul>
6	Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes note of the information provided and welcomes the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.</li> <li>Endorses the new mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group for the period 2024-2028 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/2/Add.1 and forwards them to the ECE Executive Committee for approval.</li> <li>Takes note of the timetable of activities of the Working Group in 2024 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2023/4, as well as the five-year outline of activities.</li> <li>Encourages member States and organizations to provide in-kind and financial support to the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme.</li> <li>Thanks Austria, Switzerland and the European Union for their financial support.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also thanks UNEP – including the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity – and the European Environment Agency, together with the United Nations Statistics Division, OECD, WHO and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, for their substantive support to the Programme.</li> <li>• Encourages countries to submit to the secretariat their self-assessment reports under the Shared Environmental Information System review on the theme “air” until the end of November 2023.</li> <li>• Takes note of the information provided on the expected eighth pan-European environmental assessment.</li> <li>• Encourages its members to increase the use of the common set of ECE environmental indicators in state-of-the-environment reporting and to further harmonize data flows across the region.</li> <li>• Takes note of the information provided and welcome the activities of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators.</li> <li>• Welcomes the revision of the guidelines on the application of environmental indicators and requests the publication of the 2023 edition in English, French and Russian.</li> <li>• Takes note of the proposal made to convert the Joint Task Force into a Joint Working Group and decides to defer its decision until the next regular session of the Committee in November 2024.</li> <li>• Decides to extend the mandate and terms of reference of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators until end-2025.</li> </ul>
7	Environmental Performance Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts the recommendations contained in the Third Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Kyrgyzstan (information paper No. 3) and encourages the country to develop a roadmap to implement them.</li> <li>• Adopts the recommendations contained in the EPR of Mauritania (information paper No. 4) and encourages the country to develop a roadmap to implement them.</li> <li>• Adopts the Guidance on the conduct of the fourth cycle of EPRs, as presented in document ECE/CEP/2023/6, and invites eligible countries to benefit from an EPR while considering the provisions of the Guidance, as much as feasible taking into account the national context of each country under review.</li> <li>• Welcomes the information provided on the activities of the EPR Programme and expresses its appreciation to the secretariat for the excellent work in support of the Programme.</li> <li>• Welcomes the start of the fourth EPR of Tajikistan.</li> <li>• Welcomes the next EPRs to be conducted, namely the fourth EPRs of Montenegro, and of the Republic of Moldova.</li> <li>• Welcomes the information provided on and recognizes the value of the three workshops organized in September – October 2023 for ECE EPR countries in support of their efforts to implement EPR recommendations related to waste management, addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction.</li> <li>• Expresses sincere appreciation for the work of the ECE Expert Group on EPRs.</li> <li>• Expresses appreciation to countries and organizations providing support to the Expert Group on EPRs (Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Switzerland and UNEP).</li> <li>• Invites other countries to nominate their representatives to the Expert Group on EPRs with a view to facilitate the expert review of EPRs.</li> <li>• Takes note of the information provided by the secretariat on resource mobilization for the ECE EPR Programme in 2022–2023 and, in particular, thanks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Austria, Germany and Switzerland for their financial support;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. France, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Portugal for providing expertise;</li> <li>iii. UNEP and UN ECA for providing expertise;</li> <li>iv. United Nations Country Teams and UNDP for substantive and logistical support;</li> <li>v. Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Switzerland and UNEP for having delegated their experts to serve in and support the Expert Group on EPRs.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages delegations to provide in-kind (expert) and financial support to the ECE EPR Programme.</li> <li>• Appreciates the close cooperation of the ECE Environment, Statistical, Sustainable Energy, Economic Cooperation and Trade, and Sustainable Transport Divisions and Sustainable Development Unit with the EPR Programme.</li> </ul>
8	Cross-sectoral activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes note of the information provided in the document on Cross-sectoral activities under the auspices of the UNECE Environment subprogramme (ECE/CEP/2023/4) and:</li> <li>• takes note of the information provided on the work of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development and encourages its members from the countries participating in the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development to remain informed of the process at the national level by establishing and maintaining working contacts with the Steering Committee members and focal points from their national administrations and non-governmental organizations.</li> <li>• welcomes the outcomes of the Seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health and reconfirms its commitment to contribute to the European Environment and Health Process.</li> <li>• welcomes the work under THE PEP, and invite its members to contact THE PEP secretariat should they wish their country to be involved in any of the activities under THE PEP, especially the Partnerships and the work on strategy and possible legal instruments, or to provide in-kind and financial support for activities under THE PEP.</li> <li>• take notes of the information provided with respect to gender mainstreaming across ECE activities and in environmental activities carried out by the Environment Division since the Committee's last session.</li> <li>• recognizes the importance of gender mainstreaming in environmental activities, particularly in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.</li> <li>• supports international initiatives to promote gender equality and welcomes continued cooperation and coordination with the United Nations bodies and other relevant international forums and actors to that end.</li> <li>• agrees to continue to mainstream a gender perspective in its activities.</li> </ul>
9	Regional advisory services and collaboration activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomes the information provided on regional advisory services in environment and on cooperation with other international organizations, including United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams and invites the secretariat to continue to inform the Committee of relevant developments on regional advisory services in environment.</li> </ul>
10	Presentation and exchange of views on the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomes the information provided by UNEP on the preparatory work for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP to be held in Nairobi from 26 February to 1 March 2024 and invites UNEP to continue to inform the Committee of relevant developments under the Assembly and in particular on the outcomes of its sixth session at the next session of the Committee.</li> </ul>
11	Annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2024 and outline of key components of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopts the draft annual programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2024 (ECE/CEP/2023/5) and recommends that it be approved by the Executive Committee.</li> </ul>

	programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes note of the “Outline of key components of the programme of work of the Environment subprogramme for 2025” as contained in Information paper No. 5.</li> </ul>
12	Criteria for financial support for participation in meetings and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decides that the document “Countries eligible for financial support to participate in meetings and events”, approved at its 27<sup>th</sup> session shall remain in force for another year. Requests the Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to prepare a document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o reviewing the effectiveness of the present mechanism of providing financial support for participating in meeting and events adopted by CEP in 2013;</li> <li>o reviewing possible adjustments to the present mechanism, e.g. by taking into account inflation index;</li> <li>o reviewing possible alternatives that could be considered instead of the present mechanism.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• and providing recommendations to CEP at its next regular session.</li> <li>• Recommends to all the countries to consider including cost of participation of their delegates to the Committee and other relevant meetings in their national budgets as the decision of the Committee next year might affect their eligibility for financial support for participation in meetings and events.</li> </ul>
13	Calendar of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves the proposed schedule of CEP and its Bureau meetings until 2026 (information paper No.6).</li> <li>• Welcomes, and agrees to, the proposal of Portugal to host the Bureau meeting on 4-5 June 2024 in Lisbon.</li> <li>• Decides to organize the Committee’s twenty-ninth session in Geneva, from 6 to 8 November 2024.</li> </ul>
14	Election of officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decides to elect the Bureau of the Committee as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ms. Elisabete Quintas Da Silva (Portugal) – Chair</li> <li>2. Ms. Marina Bantsenko (Estonia) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>3. Ms. Lea Bigot (Germany) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>4. Ms. Alessandra Fidanza (Italy) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>5. Ms. Maria Nagornii (Republic of Moldova) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>6. Ms. Martine Rohn Brossard (Switzerland) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>7. Mr. Jakhongir Talipov (Uzbekistan) - Vice-Chair</li> <li>8. Ms. Nino Tkhilava (Georgia) - Vice-Chair</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Expresses appreciation to the outgoing members of the Bureau, Mr. Michael Bass and Mr. Kaupo Heinma, for their work.</li> </ul>
17	Closure of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests the Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on the Committee’s decisions, including by preparing the documents and reports necessary for the Committee’s work at its next session.</li> <li>• Expresses appreciation for the work of the interpreters in servicing the present meeting.</li> <li>• Expresses strong appreciation for the work of the secretariat.</li> </ul>