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Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context

Ninth session

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment in
a Transboundary Context serving as the
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Strategic Environmental Assessment

Fifth session

Geneva, 12–15 December 2023
Item 6 of the provisional agenda

High-level event on the contribution of the Convention and/or the Protocol to energy transition, circular economy and green financing

Information on the high-level event on energy transition, circular economy and green financing

**To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Tempus conference room,
from 15.30-17.30 on Thursday, 14 December 2023**

This high-level panel discussion will present the role of the Protocol and the Convention for energy transition and for promoting circular economy in related planning and projects. The panel discussion will also include green financing, as a key component for energy transition and circular economy.

The panellists are expected to address key questions related to the topic as outlined in the background paper for the event, to share good practice examples and to explore ways to expand the awareness and the application of the treaty/treaties in that context. Other high-level representatives and heads of delegation may deliver brief statements from the floor regarding the topics of the event, with a recommended time limit of 3 minutes.

Documentation: Energy transition, circular economy and green financing: Role of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol (ECE/MP.EIA/2023/14–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/2023/14)

I. Programme

<i>Item</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timing</i>
5	Opening ceremony for the high-level segment	15.00 - 15.30
5 (a)	Election of officers for the high-level segment The MOPs to elect their chair for the high-level segment.	
5 (b)	Introductory speeches Opening remarks by: -The Chair of the high-level segment - Deputy Executive Secretary of ECE - Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin	
6	High-level event on the contribution of the Convention and/or the Protocol to energy transition, circular economy and green financing Introduction to the structure of high-level event by moderator Introduction to the panellists by the moderator	15.30 - 17.30
	Panellists:	
	1. H.E. Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov , Minister of Environment (Republic of Moldova)	
	2. H.E. Mr. Julian Popov , Minister of Environment and Water (Bulgaria)	
	3. H.E. Ms. Raminta Radavičienė , Vice-Minister of Environment (Lithuania)	
	4. Mr. Fethi Hanchi , Director General of the Tunisian National Agency for Energy Management, (Tunisia)	
	5. Prof. Giuseppe Magro , Italian President of IAIA/ Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Business in University of Bologna, (Italy)	
	6. Mr. Andriy Andrushevych , Senior Policy Expert, Resource & Analysis Center “Society and Environment” (NGO representative)	

A. Energy Transition

Presentations from two panellists illustrating good practice and setting out key points in relation to the topic of **energy transition**.

- 1. H.E. Mr. Julian Popov**, Minister of Environment and Water (Bulgaria) 15.40
- 2. Mr. Fethi Hanchi**, Director General of the Tunisian National Agency for Energy Management (Tunisia)

Facilitated panel discussions on **energy transition**.

Key guiding questions:

- How can the value of the Convention and the Protocol in promoting the social acceptability of energy transition best be demonstrated?
- Should life cycle impacts, including indirect impacts (and specifically emissions), be more clearly included in the scope of the Convention and the Protocol to fully capture emissions that occur outside the Party of origin, but are contingent on a plan, programme or project, and, to the extent appropriate, policies and legislation, in the

Party of origin (to prevent exporting Scope 3 emissions to other Parties)?

3. Does the consideration of climate impacts under the Convention and the Protocol need clarifying, e.g., through agreement by Parties to better align with the Paris Agreement focus on climate mitigation and, where relevant, adaptation?
4. Should the Convention and the Protocol also promote consideration of offsets as allowable mitigation measures? If so, how should this be undertaken?
5. How can Parties best be encouraged to implement the recommendation under the Protocol to conduct policy-level strategic environmental assessment to ensure consistency between sector-specific plans with relevance to energy transition?
6. What best practice cases exist for the use of strategic environmental assessment and transboundary environmental impact assessment in promoting energy transition?

Statements and questions from the floor related to **energy transition**. Statements and/or questions.

1. **Ms. Martine Rohn**, Deputy Head of International Affairs Division; Head of Europe, Trade and Development Cooperation Section, Federal Office for the Environment, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (Switzerland)

B. Circular Economy

Timing

Presentations from two panellists illustrating good practice and setting out key points in relation to the topic of **circular economy**.

1. **H.E. Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov**, Environment Minister (Republic of Moldova)
2. **H.E. Ms. Raminta Radavičienė**, Vice-Minister of Environment (Lithuania)

16.10

Facilitated panel discussions on the **circular economy**.

Key guiding questions:

1. How can the Convention and the Protocol be used to stimulate best practice approaches to the circular economy, encompassing both vertical and horizontal integration and civil society engagement?
2. How can transboundary environmental impact assessment under the Convention best be used to identify and promote circular economy opportunities (e.g., where waste generated by the Party of origin can be used as a raw material by any of the concerned Parties)?
3. How can consideration of whether a proposed action will enable/prevent progress towards circularity be secured under the Protocol and/or the Convention? Should, for instance, the consideration of circularity be recommended as good practice in applying the Convention and/or the Protocol by the Parties through a decision by the Meeting of the Parties?

4. How can the Convention and/or the Protocol best be used to avoid short- and medium-term economic imbalances that might result from uneven development of the circular economy across Parties?
5. Should environmental reports (under the Protocol) and environmental impact assessment documentation (under the Convention) be required to include circular economy alternatives as part of the consideration of reasonable alternatives? How can such a requirement be defined, codified and implemented?
6. How best can circular economy plans developed by Parties be assessed under the Protocol?

Statements and questions from the floor related to **circular economy**.
Statements and/or questions.

1. **Ms. Julia Nowacki**, Technical Officer, European Center for Environment and Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe

C. Green Financing

Timing

Presentations from two panellists illustrating good practice and setting out key points in relation to the topic of **green financing**.

1. **Prof. Giuseppe Magro**, Italian President of IAIA/ Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Business in University of Bologna (Italy)
2. **Mr. Andriy Andrusevych**, Senior Policy Expert, Resource & Analysis Center “Society and Environment” (NGO representative)

16.40

Facilitated panel discussions on **green financing**.

Key guiding questions:

1. How should the key concepts of green taxonomies (notably, “Do no significant harm” and “Makes a substantial contribution to at least one of these environmental objectives” (on climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, transition to a circular economy, pollution prevention and control, and protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems)) best be aligned with the Convention and the Protocol to ensure consistent decision-making throughout planning and financing stages?
2. How can Parties best be encouraged to implement the recommendation under the Protocol to conduct policy-level strategic environmental assessment in order to ensure consistency between sector-specific plans with relevance to green financing?
3. In line with question 3 from the energy transition topic (see box 2 above), does the meaning of “climate” under the Convention and Protocol need to be harmonized with the understanding thereof under green finance taxonomies?

4. Is there merit in determining how any screening criteria supporting the application of sustainable finance taxonomies can be aligned with assessment obligations under the Convention and the Protocol?
5. What role can the Convention and the Protocol play in assisting with sustainability reporting standards?
6. Is the concept of double materiality as embedded in sustainability reporting standards relevant to transboundary environmental impact assessment conducted under the Convention, and strategic environmental assessment conducted under the Protocol? If so, what can be done to improve the linkages between the operation of these instruments and sustainability reporting standards requirements?

Statements and questions from the floor related to **green financing**. Statements and/or questions.

1. **Ms. Eva Mayerhofer**, Lead Biodiversity Specialist, European Investment Bank

One or two open questions, or additional statements from the floor, (time permitting)

Moderator's summary/key points from the discussion

Close

17.30

II. Panellist biographies



Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, has been the Minister of Environment for Moldova since November 2022. Minister Iordanov holds a Ph.D. thesis on environmental law from the Academy of Science of Moldova, and from 1998 taught environmental law and European environmental law at the State University of Moldova law faculty. She has more than 25 years of activities in environmental law. She is a nationally- and internationally recognized expert on environmental law, environmental governance, public interest environmental litigations as well as environmental assessment, air legislation, water, and waste management, including the management of hazardous waste and chemical substances, public participation, civil society, and management of natural protected areas. Minister Iordanov is the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention secretariat, a member of the PRTR Compliance Committee, and the co-chair of the OECD Task Force on Green Economy.

She also has good knowledge in the field of implementation of the Aarhus, Espoo, Stockholm, Basel Conventions, and the PRTR, and SEA Protocols at national and regional levels. Minister Iordanov has experience working with international partners like the United Nations, World Bank, EBRD, OSCE, and EU Delegations.

As Minister of Environment, she is leading the process of integrating the Republic of Moldova into the European Union in environmental protection and sustainable management of nature.



Mr. Julian Popov is the Minister of Environment and Water for Bulgaria. Before becoming a Minister, Mr. Popov was a fellow at the European Climate Foundation, Chairman of the Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE). He was a goodwill ambassador of Bulgaria for energy and climate policy and an energy security adviser to the President of Bulgaria.

Minister Popov is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, of the Climate-KIC Advisory Council and of several other energy- and climate-related organizations. He is one of the founders and currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the New Bulgarian University and a co-founder of the Tunisian School of Politics. He has been recognized twice by the EurActiv as one of the 40 most influential voices in European energy policies. *Financial Times*, *Project Syndicate*, *NS Energy Monitor*, *The Independent*, *Al Jazeera*, *Huffington Post*, *EurActiv* and many other have carried his articles on climate and energy policy. Author of numerous newspaper articles, two books and co-author of two books, “The European Supergrid” and “Energy and Climate Diplomacy”.



Ms. Raminta Radavičienė is the Vice-Minister of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, responsible for waste management, water and air quality, chemicals, environmental impact assessment and underground natural resources. She coordinates the activities of Environment Protection Agency, Environment Protection Department and Geological Survey of Lithuania.

Vice-minister Radavičienė re-joined the ministry in 2021 after a break of 8 years in favour of other activities and has devoted herself to the public sector for over 10 years. The Vice-minister has also worked for the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists as the director of the Economy and Business Environment department and prior to that – as the director of the Municipal Services and Waste Management Association.

She graduated from Vilnius University in Lithuania with a master’s degree in environmental sciences and from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University in Lithuania with a bachelor’s degree in environmental engineering. The main areas of responsibility during her professional career were related to the sectors of environment, energy and infrastructure, with an emphasis on waste management, which includes application of the principles of circular economy. She is a native speaker of Lithuanian, with working proficiency in English and Russian.



Mr. Fethi Hanchi graduated as an engineer, has more than 25 years of experience in the energy field, and has been actively involved in the reform of the energy sector in Tunisia, including contributing to the design, implementation and evaluation of programs for the development of energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energies in the country.

During his professional career, Mr. Hanchi held many positions of responsibility at the National Agency for Energy Conservation (ANME): he started his career as a Project Engineer in charge of the transport sector (1998-2002), then head of the transport department (2002-2008), then Deputy Director for the Rational Use of Energy in charge of the management and coordination of energy efficiency programs and activities in the building and transport sectors as well as the territorial dimension (2008-2011). In February 2011, he was appointed Director of Rational Use of Energy then Central Technical Director in March 2019 with a portfolio that includes energy efficiency and renewable energy activities.

In June 2020, he was nominated General Director of ANME and holds this position until today. Mr. Hanchi is a member of the boards of directors of the three leading Tunisian companies in terms of turnover, namely: the Tunisian Society of Refining Industries (STIR), the National Company of oil Distribution (AGIL) and the Tunisian Company for Petroleum Activities (ETAP). He is also a member of the Board of Directors of STEG renewable energies. He is part of a couple of Working Groups of the International Energy Agency (GEF Global EMobility Programme): Charging and Grid Integration Working Group and Working Group on Light Duty E-Vehicles. He recently joined the Global Steering Committee of the Climate Promise initiative of the UNDP. On the extra-professional level, Mr. Hanchi has held the position of Secretary General of the Tunisian Cluster for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energies TuniCREEE since March 2021.



Prof. Giuseppe Magro, representing Italy, is a Nuclear Engineer with more than 20 years of experience in international impact assessment. He is the Italian President of International Association for Impact Assessment. He is consults for Governments and Environmental National Agencies in the field of Artificial Intelligence decision support systems for permitting, EIA, SEA and ESG assessment. He is Adjunct Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Business in University of Bologna and member of EURISPES Scientific Committee.

He has carried out training activities in the United Kingdom for Environmental Protection Agencies (UK / EI EPA), in Italy for the Ecological Operating Units (NOE), for the National Forestry Corps, the Italian Banking Association (ABI), ARPA, as well as for IT institutional sector in the Circular Economy permitting Governance. He directed and chaired the 35th World Conference on environmental, economic and social impact IAIA15 "Impact Assessment in the Digital Era", sponsored by the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

He has authored numerous publications and articles and author of the Book "Open Data & Environment" (2015) in the fields of Artificial Intelligence applications for sustainability.



Mr. Andriy Andrusevych is Senior Policy Expert at Resource & Analysis Center "Society and Environment", an environmental think-tank organization in Ukraine. He is also a Vice-President and a Board member of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the largest network of environmental citizens' organisations in Europe.

He is formerly lecturer of International Environmental Law, Environmental Human Rights and Dispute Resolution in International Relations at Lviv National University (2002-2009) and the LL.M. program of the Ukrainian Catholic University Law School.

Mr. Andrusevych has many years of experience working with environmental public interest law organizations and is an active member of the coordination body of the European ECO Forum, a coalition of environmental NGOs from all parts of Eurasia. He has served for many years as the European ECO Forum Legal Focal Point for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and has extensive experience in promoting implementation of and compliance with multilateral environmental agreements, especially the Aarhus and Espoo Conventions. In recent years he has focused on Ukraine's implementation of the EU environmental and climate acquis.
