



Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

Twenty-eighth session of ECE Committee on Environmental Policy
1-3 November 2023

Albena Karadjova



Air Convention Status



ENVIRONMENT

- Year of adoption: **1979**
- Year of entering into force: **1983**
- Present number of **Parties** to the **MEA**: **51**
- Present number of **Parties** to the **8 protocols and respective amendments** (all in force in 2023):

1984	Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP)	47
1985	Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes by at least 30 per cent	25
1988	Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes	35
1991	Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes	24
1994	Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions	29
1998	Protocol on Heavy Metals	35
	2012 Amendments	26
1998	Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants	34
	2009 Amendments	24-25
1999	Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone	31
	2012 Amendments	28

Air Convention

Developments and achievements



ENVIRONMENT

- **Successful regional cooperation**
 - Since 1979, development into a **successful regional framework** for controlling and reducing transboundary air pollution and its detrimental effects on human health and the environment
- **Emission reduction commitments**
 - Gradual extension of substances covered, notably to **ground-level ozone, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and particulate matter**
- **Science-policy-interface & common knowledge basis**
 - Provision of access to emission, measurement and modelling **data and information** on the effects of air pollution on ecosystems, health, crops and materials
 - Support of decision-making by **scientific work** as a major part of the work conducted under the Air Convention
- **Capacity-building programme**
 - Support of the analysis of national legislation, the development of emission inventories, and the participation in the Convention's activities and awareness-raising in the **EECCA and Western Balkan regions** with, for example, national and subregional workshops or e-learning courses
- **Main achievements**
 - **Decoupling** of air pollutant emissions and economic growth
 - **Reduction of emissions** of certain air pollutants **by 40 to 80 per cent**
 - **Recovery** of forest soils and lakes from **acidification**
 - **Avoidance** of **600,000 premature deaths** annually
 - **More than 70 capacity-building events** conducted between 2014 and 2023 and **2 e-learning courses developed**

Air Convention

Lessons and challenges



ENVIRONMENT



- Despite significant progress, **challenges** remain, for example, in:
 - **Achieving further emission reductions for**
 - Ozone and its precursors, such as methane
 - Particulate matter and its precursors
 - Nitrogen compounds, such as ammonia/ammonium
 - **Encouraging broader ratification of the more recent protocols to the Air Convention**
 - Incentives, such as flexibilities, included in the Gothenburg Protocol as amended have not had the desired effect
 - **Reacting to transboundary air pollution as a global problem**
 - Transboundary air pollution from outside the ECE region has a growing impact on the air quality in the region
 - **Strengthening the Air Convention's role in the context of climate change and biodiversity loss**
 - The interaction between air pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss is complex
 - Air pollution is the central link in the interaction between ozone, nitrogen, climate change and ecosystems

Air Convention Plans and prospects



ENVIRONMENT

- **Further emission reductions and ratifications**
 - **Opening of negotiations** expected at the end of 2023 as a follow-up to the review of the Gothenburg Protocol as amended which was completed in 2022
 - Continuing **awareness-raising** and **capacity-building**
- **Transboundary air pollution as a global problem**
 - **Strengthening cooperation** with actors outside the ECE region, for example, through the Task Force on International Cooperation on Air Pollution
- **Air pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss**
 - **Analysing the interactions between air pollution and climate change mitigation measures** further, especially to identify synergetic abatement strategies and policies
 - **Extending cooperation** with the relevant fora



ENVIRONMENT



Thank you!

<https://unece.org/environmental-policy-1/air>

Albena Karadjova
Air Convention
UNECE

