

SUMMARY

Special Session on Environmental Information and Reporting

co-organised by the European Environment Agency (EEA), OECD and the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic

Monday, 22 October 2018

Special Session on Environmental Information and Reporting was held in the morning of 22 October 2018 in the margins of the Third Annual Meeting of the GREEN Action Task Force. This special session was co-organised and co-chaired by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the OECD and the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. It aimed at presenting to the Task Force members relevant aspects of sharing environmental information and discuss its use for the state-of-environment (SoE) reporting based on the EEA and Eionet experiences. This activity has been extended to the Eastern Partnership countries under the currently implemented ENI SEIS II East project, under which the Slovak Environment Agency (SEA) was bringing its national experience on environmental reporting and use of data and information in preparing the SoE reports.

The event was attended by approximately 50 representatives of the EU Member States, Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries, colleagues from OECD, UNECE, UNIDO and the European Commission (DG NEAR).

Following an introduction of the Slovak Environment Agency about the cooperation with the region, partner countries from the Eastern Partnership shared their experiences in working with EEA on the implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) also in support of the countries' commitment at a Ministerial level agreed in the Declaration from Batumi (June 2016) under the 'Environment for Europe' UNECE-led process '*to have SEIS in the region in place by 2021*'.

Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, Mykola Kuzio, underlined the importance of reliable and comparable data for the benefit of the policy-makers and the citizens for improving the state of environment across the region. Maria Nagornii representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment of Republic of Moldova emphasised the advantage of multiple use of environmental data and indicators, including when developing the green growth strategy of the country. In that context, a presentation about the EEA contribution to establishing SEIS across the pan-European region building on its cooperation with the Eastern Partnership region was made. This was complemented by Nicholas Bonvoisin from the UNECE Environmental Division speaking about the trilateral EEA-UNECE-UNEP partnership in implementing SEIS across pan-European region in support to the regular assessment process and the mid-year review undertaken earlier this year in assessing progress after the Batumi Ministerial.



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Further discussion addressed the importance of synergies between the partner organisations in streamlining environmental information and its use to informed decision-making, also in the context of Green Growth and Green Economy discussions. SEIS was recognised as appropriate framework for promoting greater accessibility to the environmental information that also has direct link to the Aarhus Convention and public access to environmental information. This is a potential area of cooperation between EEA-UNECE and other key partners for the future as well. The importance of linking the available environmental information at national to regional and then on to global level was also underlined.

As part of the efforts in streamlining and re-use of environmental information, OECD presented its work on indicators for green growth and bringing the economic perspective into the environmental measurements, as well as environment-related revenues and accounting for environmental expenditures. Ongoing work on dynamic applications of indicators into systemic approach was on the agenda and will be continued under the new programme EU4Environment in the Eastern Partnership context. Example of undertaken study was given on water-food-energy nexus in Central Asian countries and the activities in developing green growth indicators. From EU perspective, Greening the European Semester was mentioned as an example for better coordinating economic policies in European Union countries, taking into account specific instruments aimed at sustainability of integrated economic, social and environmental policies.

Other relevant aspects that were addressed during this special session were as follows:

- Important to deliver in accessible format environmental information to both citizens and decision makers to support environmental governance at various levels;
- Extremely important to maintain good cooperation and coordination of international organisations;
- Sharing EEA and Eionet examples with partners from the Eastern region is a very good opportunity to build on experience of countries that went through similar transition in the 1990-ies (such as Slovakia);
- Good monitoring system is crucial to support indicator system and Integrated assessment preparation that in turn is crucial to ensure uptake of environmental information by decision makers and public;
- SEIS principles are a good basis for ensuring sustainability of efforts;
- Reporting to SDGs is a common goal that looks into the efficiency of the reporting system and can be the linking element in the further cooperation activities;
- Need to combine efforts in ensuring further developments with respect to functioning resource efficiency and circular economy.

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