

**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE
ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE
TASK FORCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION
PROGRAMME FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EAP TASK FORCE
(24-25 September 2012, Oslo, Norway)**

A draft version of this document was circulated to meeting participants for endorsement through a written procedure. The comments that were received were integrated into the text. The attached document is, therefore, the final Summary record of the 2012 meeting of the EAP Task Force.

ACTION REQUIRED: For information.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE EAP TASK FORCE

24-25 September 2012, Oslo

Summary Record

Overall information about the meeting

1. The Annual Meeting of the Task Force for the implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (EAP Task Force) was organised on 24-25 September 2012 in Oslo. It was hosted by the Ministry of Environment of Norway. The meeting was attended by government officials and other stakeholders from nine countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and ten OECD member states. Representatives of several international organisations, NGOs, the EECCA business community and the five Regional Environmental Centres (RECs) were also present (see Annex 1 for the list of participants).

2. The meeting was co-chaired by the EAP Task Force's Co-chair Mr. Jurgen Keinhorst (Germany) and Ms. Nino Kvernadze (Georgia). Mr. Paul Hofseth (Norway), Mr. Gheorghe Constantin (Romania) and Ms. Marie-Louise Von Münchhausen (Germany) chaired different sessions.

Welcome and adoption of the draft agenda

3. The Task Force:

- Took note of the opening statement by Ms. Henriette Westhrin, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of Norway, in which, among other things, she confirmed her country's continued interest to support work conducted under the EAP Task Force's umbrella, and
- Adopted the Draft Agenda [ENV/EPOC/EAP/A(2012)2] without amendment.

Implications of the Rio+20 Summit and the World Water Forum for work in EECCA

4. The Task Force:

- Took note of the statement by UNECE's Committee on Environmental Policy Chair (Ms. Elisabete Quintas) on the importance of regional commissions to implement the Rio+20 decisions;
- Took note that the Earth Summit welcomed a new cross-regional initiative – the Green Bridge Programme – launched by the Government of Kazakhstan; noted the request from Kazakhstan (Ms. Ainur Kumatova) to further support the on-going work to institutionalise this initiative; and noted the development by Kazakhstan of a National Strategy of Transition to Green Economy;
- Took note of the statement by the European Commission (Mr. Andrzej Januszewski) on the current efforts of the EC to support implementation of green growth policies, in particular in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, and a related seminar to be hosted by the EC on 4 October 2012 in Brussels, as well as of the on-going work to develop a Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Waters;

- Took note of the RECs' plans to extend the scope of current projects in line with needs arising from the Sixth World Water Forum (WWF-6) and Rio+20 Summit;
- Acknowledged the role that the "Environmental for Europe" process and the EAP Task Force's work on the green economy and water resources management could play in supporting the follow up to the WWF-6 and the Rio+20 Conference.

Delivering on green growth in the EECCA countries: Environmental fiscal reforms

5. The Task Force:

- Took note of several presentations on environmentally harmful subsidies: by the Secretariat (Ms. Nelly Petkova) [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2012)2]; by Ms. Ivetta Gerasimchuk, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, on identifying and measuring subsidies to gas and oil producers in the Russian Federation; and by Ms. Meruert Makhmutova, Consultant to OECD, who presented an initial overview of energy subsidies in Kazakhstan as part of the EAP Task Force's pilot project;
- Expressed support for the work on energy subsidies and climate change and, in particular:
 - stressed the need for a practical toolbox to carry out the analysis of subsidy schemes and the need for more dissemination of information at a country level;
 - emphasised the importance of addressing the social dimension of the reform, including flanking measures to alleviate potentially negative impacts on affected group, and of involving all relevant stakeholders in discussions;
 - called on the Secretariat to take full account of methodologies which governments had developed for this type of work when conducting country-level work;
- Broadly supported the policy recommendations provided in the report "Refocusing economic and other monetary instruments for greater environmental impact: How to unblock reform in EECCA" [ENV/EPOC/EAP/(2012)3] presented by the Secretariat (Mr. Eugene Mazur), subject to written comments to be provided by 20 October 2012;
- Took note of country-level progress and demand for further support voiced by delegates from Ukraine (Ms. Natalia Trofymenko) and Belarus (Ms. Irina Komosko);
- Agreed that experience from Nordic Countries (presented by Ms. Maria Vuorelma, Nordic Council of Ministers) in reforming their economic instruments can serve as a useful reference.

Fostering green innovation and technology cooperation in the EECCA countries

6. The Task Force:

- Took note of the introduction by the Secretariat (Ms. Angela Bularga) on the key issues to be addressed in the EECCA context and lessons learned from OECD practice, as outlined in ENV/EPOC/EAP/(2012)4 and ENV/EPOC/EAP/(2012)9;

- Welcomed examples of strategies and tools for promoting eco-innovation stemming from the OECD and central European countries experience, in particular:
 - the EU Eco-innovation Action Plan presented by Ms. Paola Migliorini (European Commission);
 - South Korea’s efforts to implement the four-year National Eco-Innovation Programme of 2011 presented by Mr. Jae-Seok Kim (Korea Environmental Industry and Technology Institute);
 - experience from Germany (Ms. Marie-Louise Von Münchhausen) on major elements of effective international cooperation on eco-innovation;
 - lessons learned by the REC for Central and Eastern Europe (Mr. Ruslan Zhechkov) on the need to avoid an exclusive focus on finance as the key barrier, and the importance of first addressing policy settings and the mindsets of businesses.
- Welcomed relevant initiatives in EECCA countries, such as:
 - The establishment of “technological platforms” in the Russian Federation that aim at strengthening cooperation between the economic and environmental arms of the government, and with the private sector actors, as presented by Mr. Mikhail Kozeltsev (REC Russia);
 - The “Green Georgia” initiative that aims at helping the private sector to grasp immediate, short-term opportunities related to green growth – as presented by Mr. Raphael Jozan (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development);
 - On-going work in Belarus to develop a strategy paper in support to the development of green economy in the country;
- Agreed on the importance of government action to promote eco-innovation, the need to sequence reforms within clear “roadmaps” and took note of demand from the Minister of Economy of Ukraine (Ms. Ludmila Musina) to proceed with road-mapping nationally;
- Agreed on the need to strengthen existing links between the EAP Task Force’s programme and eco-innovation promotion initiatives in the region and welcomed interest expressed by several international organisations to cooperate in EECCA, in particular in conjunction with:
 - UNIDO’s intention to further extend in the EECCA region the Green Industry Initiative;
 - UNEP’s work in support to green economy road-mapping within the framework of UNEP’s 10 Year Framework of Programme (10 YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production, adopted at the Rio+20 conference;
 - UNECE’s work to build capacity in the diffusion of innovative technologies, carried out within the framework of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), and a new series of Innovation Performance Reviews, which were already issued for Belarus and Kazakhstan, with Ukraine to follow;
 - WHO efforts to promote innovation at the interface of environmental and health policy objectives, especially focusing on the water sector;
- Agreed that representatives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements should be invited to take part in work and regional policy dialogue on eco-innovation;

- Agreed that the EAP Task Force should prepare an inventory of existing information resources and technology platforms in the EECCA countries.

Economic instruments for water resources management: experience in selected EECCA countries

7. The Task Force:

- Took note of the potential benefits of economic instruments to manage water, as highlighted by the Secretariat (Mr. Xavier Leflaive), and the accompanying measures that governments could consider to facilitate the reform and further diffusion of such instruments;
- Welcomed efforts to promote water policy reforms in Kyrgyzstan, presented by Mr. Erkin Orolbaev (State Water Committee) and progress on the EAP Task Force's project to strengthen the use of economic instruments for water resource management in Kyrgyzstan, presented by the Secretariat (Mr. Alexandre Martoussevitch);
- Took note of the OECD recommendation to countries of the Kura river basin (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) to reform existing economic instruments for water resources management and to adopt new ones, as presented by the Secretariat (Ms. Tatiana Efimova);
- Encouraged further adoption and use of payment for ecosystem services in Central Asia, building on a successful experience in Kyrgyzstan presented by Mr. Talaybek Makeyev (CAREC).
- Took note of the presentation by Mr. Alexander Shekhovtsov (Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) on an ongoing UNDP and GEF – sponsored project on integrated water resources management in the Lake Baikal basin and welcomed the opportunity to link it with the ongoing OECD work on economic instruments for water resources management in the Russian Federation;
- Provided guidance on future work on economic instruments for water resources management under the EAP Task Force umbrella.

Other issues related to water resources management in EECCA

8. The Task Force:

- Took note of possible measures to adapt the water sector to climate change in Moldova, proposed by the EAP Task Force as presented by the Secretariat (Mr. Alexandre Martoussevitch). Adaptation measures include sound water management, actions to reduce vulnerability, and measures to enhance flexibility in water management, water services and investment decisions;
- Welcomed progress on the on-going project in Ukraine (Kalmius River Basin Council) and preliminary lessons on options to finance river basins councils in the region, building on a review of the experience of selected OECD and non-member countries, which were presented by the Secretariat (Ms. Tatiana Efimova).

Programme implementation and plans for 2013

9. The Task Force:

- Took note of the reports by the Secretariat (Mr. Brendan Gillespie, Mr. Xavier Leflaive and Ms. Angela Bularga) on progress in implementing projects under the 2013 EAP Task Force programme of work and the current budgetary situation; of the prospects for a more stable financial situation due to multi-year grants provided or under negotiation with several donors, such as the European Commission, Finland, Germany and Norway; and of the critical importance of other donors' contributions in order to leverage such funding;
- Discussed and endorsed the 2012 progress report [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2012)7] and the 2013 work programme proposal [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2012)8] and acknowledged interest from EECCA countries to host pilot projects;
- Acknowledged the willingness expressed by donor countries to provide voluntary contributions to support programme implementation; expressed gratitude to all EAP Task Force's donors for their continued interest to do so;
- Provided positive feedback on the EECCA RECs' presentations on on-going and future activities and requested that a work programme be developed for the next meeting and shared in advance of the meeting.

Bureau elections

10. The Task Force:

- Expressed its appreciation for the work of the outgoing Bureau members: Mr. Ravshan Mamatkulov (Uzbekistan) and Mr. Ruslan Bultrikov (Kazakhstan);
- Designated new members of the Bureau, as follows: Ms. Ainur Kumatova (Kazakhstan) and Mr. Shukhrat Sharafutdinov (Uzbekistan) and took note that one place on the side of OECD/EU member countries remains vacant.

Other business and closing remarks

11. The Task Force:

- Took note that the Summary Record of the previous EAP Task Force Meeting, held on 20-21 October 2011 [ENV/EPOC/EAP/M(2011)3] had been adopted through a written procedure;
- Took note of the presentation by the UNECE Secretariat (Ms. Angela Sochirca) on the "Environment for Europe" mid-term review and acknowledged the need for the EAP Task Force to provide a contribution to this process in accordance with the established deadlines;
- Took note of the call by the European Environmental Agency (Mr. David Stanners) to contribute to the development of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) more actively;
- Welcomed participation of the South Korean delegates and expressed hopes for the country's future involvement in the EAP Task Force's work on green growth and/or on water;

- Took note of the presentation by the International Business Council (Ms. Aibeyke Esengulova) on the private sector's actions in Central Asia to support green development;
- Acknowledged interest expressed by the Uzbek Government and the Caucasus REC to host the next annual meeting in Tashkent and Tbilisi, respectively, and agreed that the Bureau should take a final decision on the dates and venue of the next annual meeting;
- Agreed to provide feedback on the meeting organisation electronically.

ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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