



FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE

Århus, Denmark
23 - 25 June 1998

DECLARATION
by the Ministers of Environment of the region of the
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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A. PREAMBLE

1. We, the Environment Ministers and Heads of delegations from 52 countries in the UN/ECE region and the representative of the European Commission, met at Århus, Denmark, from 23 to 25 June 1998, in the fourth of a series of Ministerial Conferences held as part of the "Environment for Europe" process.
2. We reaffirm our strong commitment, developed at the three previous Ministerial Conferences in Dobris (1991), Lucerne (1993) and Sofia (1995), to cooperate on environmental protection in the ECE region. We promise to satisfy the obligations arising from the Declarations made at those three Conferences. In particular, we declare that further integration of environmental considerations into policies in all sectors is of critical importance to the improvement of the environment. We welcome the active participation of the NGO community as well as the business community and the trade unions at the Conference. We also recognize the political importance of the "Environment for Europe" process as the major long-term pan-European political framework for the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development.
3. We welcome the recovery of peace in areas formerly affected by armed conflicts, which opens the way to environmental improvement in those areas. We call upon States where such conflicts continue to re-establish and strengthen peace.
4. Bearing in mind that the EU enlargement will create new challenges both for the economy and for the environment, the enlargement can provide a powerful stimulus for environmental improvement in the applicant countries. There is no similar development in other CEE countries or in the Newly Independent States (NIS). Many of these countries still face severe environmental problems. The "Environment for Europe" process should therefore focus more of its resources on these countries in order to promote a convergence in environmental policies and conditions within the European region, as a step towards sustainable development.
5. We recognize the importance of regional, subregional and bilateral environmental cooperation in the UN/ECE region. In this connection we welcome the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Environment of the Central Asian Region (Almaty, 22 April 1998) and their commitment to mutual cooperation and support their decision to prepare and

implement the Regional Environmental Action Plan within the "Environment for Europe" process. We also welcome and support the adoption of the Baltic Agenda 21 on 3 June 1998 in Nyborg (Denmark), which will play a major role in the Baltic Sea region.

B. THE ECE REGION AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

6. We recognize that many of the environmental problems of the world have their origin in the UN/ECE region and we reaffirm the special responsibilities of the UN/ECE countries in contributing to solving these problems and our aspiration towards a global leadership role for the UN/ECE countries in pursuing sustainable development. We welcome and are grateful for the support of international organizations.
7. We commit ourselves to complying with the obligations arising from those environmental conventions to which we are Parties. Furthermore, we note with great concern that some UN/ECE States are not Parties to a number of relevant environmental conventions and other legal instruments, and we urge these States to take all appropriate steps to become Parties to those instruments as soon as possible.
8. In order further to contribute to the global pursuit of sustainable development, we continue to support the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant global organizations and conventions.
9. We need strong, efficient and effective compliance regimes backing the legally binding commitments arising from multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). It is important that procedures and mechanisms, entailing binding consequences, where appropriate, for Parties in non-compliance are further elaborated. We will provide full support for broader participation in and effective implementation of the existing MEAs and their mechanisms for exchanging information and achieving compliance.
10. We stress the importance of international cooperation in a non-confrontational and supportive fashion to strengthen the enforcement of national environmental law. In this respect we welcome the establishment of informal, cooperative networks of environmental inspectors in the UN/ECE region, such as the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law - Accession Countries (IMPEL-AC) and a network for environmental inspectors in the region of central and eastern Europe and Central Asia.
11. We emphasize that the objectives and obligations of MEAs should not be hampered by other international agreements, and the need to ensure that the WTO rules, provisions and procedures take full account of the need to promote a high level of environmental protection. In particular, the multilateral trading system should, under clear and predictable rules, accommodate the use of trade measures taken in the framework of

MEAs.¹ We will promote efforts to ensure that environmental concerns are effectively integrated into the international investment agreements such as the proposed multilateral agreement on investment in a way that supports sustainable development, and so as not to limit the capacity to make and implement national and international environmental policies.

12. Climate change remains the greatest global environmental threat to the world's sustainable development, public health and future prosperity. The Kyoto Protocol was a historic turning point and it is essential that we now translate the promise of Kyoto into reality. In this context we are aware of our responsibility to take the lead in combating climate change. Domestically, our nations undertake to pursue immediately significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We firmly believe that these reductions can be achieved cost-effectively and deliver present and future improvements in the quality of life. Internationally we must maintain the momentum by making progress at the fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at Buenos Aires on the outstanding issues left by Kyoto. Flexible mechanisms such as international emissions trading, joint implementation and clean development mechanism shall be supplemental to domestic actions. They can play an essential role in achieving our commitments cost-effectively. Defining the relevant principles, modalities, rules and guidelines to ensure that these mechanisms provide real environmental benefit is a priority. It is important that these flexibilities, in particular trading, should help us to achieve greater overall abatement of greenhouse gases than would otherwise occur. The rules must ensure an enforceable, accountable, verifiable, open and transparent trading system. Work on the treatment of carbon sinks should be continued. We welcome the recent signature of the Kyoto Protocol by some of us and confirm the intention of the rest of us to sign it within the next year. We need a strong, efficient and effective compliance regime backing the legally binding commitments under the Protocol.²
13. In view of the continuing grave concern about unsafe nuclear installations, we reaffirm our pledge to phase them out as soon as possible.³ We acknowledge the need to solve the problems connected to the decommissioning of nuclear reactors and power plants, the management of nuclear waste and operational safety. In this regard

¹ The United States of America cannot agree to the first two sentences in paragraph 11.

² General reservation by Turkey.

³ Austria, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden reaffirm their position that the use of nuclear energy in general should be phased out in the long term. This position is shared by Cyprus.

we take note of the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and we urge all States that have not already done so to take all appropriate steps to become parties to that Convention and to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We also reaffirm the need for an appropriate international liability regime for the compensation of damage caused by nuclear installations, noting the recent efforts of the international community to improve liability regimes.

14. We recall the concerns expressed by many States about the risks of environmental and health damage involved in nuclear arms testing and urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
15. We note the increasing transboundary movement of living modified organisms. Accordingly, there is a growing need to address safety issues and we are firmly committed to finalizing the negotiation of a biosafety protocol, based on scientific risk assessment and the precautionary principle, to the Convention on Biological Diversity, by February 1999.

THE STATE OF THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT

16. We welcome the report *Europe's Environment: The Second Assessment* requested at our last meeting in Sofia in September 1995 and published recently by the European Environment Agency (EEA). Although some pressures have been reduced, this has not generally led to an improvement in the state or quality of the environment of Europe. We are therefore required to take further action, in particular in the following fields:
 - Transport, where governmental policies are failing to keep pace with the growth in traffic, which is adding to the problems of air pollution, climate change, noise, congestion and biodiversity/habitat loss. We are determined to secure a sustainable and environmentally sound pattern of transport and to promote the use of public transport, transport by sea, rail, and non-motorized transport. Economic instruments should be used as a way of reducing transport volumes while reflecting environmental costs in transport prices, especially for freight transport;
 - Agriculture, where much more needs to be done better to reconcile environmental concerns with agricultural practices, e.g. by further developing the rules of good agricultural practice, by encouraging environmentally friendly agricultural production techniques, by making agricultural support payments reflect environmental protection, and by implementing policies designed to neutralize the environmental impact of intensive animal production systems;

- Energy, where new efforts are needed to ensure that the available international instruments are implemented fully at the national level, particularly in the fields of energy conservation and the promotion and sustainable use of renewable energy resources;
 - Chemicals, where further evaluation of hazards and exposures and their impacts on human health and the environment is needed. Such evaluations should be based on scientific evaluation, including risk assessment, and decisions should respect the precautionary principle;
 - Surface, subterranean, coastal and marine waters, where threats to these waters remain in spite of the fact that many efforts have been made. Improved action therefore needs to be taken towards the progressive reduction of pollutants (incl. heavy metals and anthropogenic chemicals) and by reducing inputs from nutrient sources;
 - Soil degradation, where serious problems continue and too little progress has been made in soil conservation and remediation of contaminated sites. Further work is needed on prevention strategies for desertification;
 - Biodiversity, where the overall pressures continue to increase and the need for the actions mentioned under the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy section is particular urgent.
17. We recognize that *Europe's Environment: The Second Assessment* does not cover Central Asia. In this connection we welcome the report "Central Asia: Environment Assessment" prepared by the countries in this region.
18. We recognize that mechanisms for coordinated monitoring, data collection, processing and management in the European region are still inadequate. In the future we should give high priority to improving these mechanisms as well as the state of environmental information to support decision-making and to improve the availability of reliable environmental information to the public. With this in mind, we call for closer cooperation between all governments, organizations and existing information and observation networks. We welcome the initiative of the Russian Federation to convene a special meeting during the first half of 1999 in Moscow with a view to strengthening the cooperation in this field. Future work in this area should take fully into account the work of existing networks and fora, in particular the European Environment Agency.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME FOR EUROPE

19. Environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures are important means for integrating environmental concerns into development projects and for providing access to information and public participation. We welcome the recent entry into force of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context. We urge the countries of the UN/ECE region to take all appropriate steps to become Parties to the Convention and implement it. We also note the progress made in the introduction of EIA in CEE countries and welcome the Sofia Initiative on EIA led by Croatia.
20. We recognize that strategic environmental assessment facilitates the systematic analyses of the environmental impacts of proposed policies, plans and programmes and invite countries and international finance institutions to introduce and/or carry out strategic environmental assessments with the appropriate participation of NGOs and citizens. We emphasize that – with a view to the integration of environmental considerations in the decision-making process in other policies – assessments of international sectoral policies, plans and programmes in the UN/ECE region in areas such as transport, energy and agriculture should be undertaken as a matter of priority.
21. We recognize that changes in consumption and production patterns must lie at the heart of the transition towards a sustainable UN/ECE region; with concern we note that developments in the countries with economies in transition may have the effect of duplicating unsustainable consumption patterns in other parts of the region.

AIR POLLUTION PREVENTION

22. We welcome the adoption and signature of the Protocols on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and on Heavy Metals within the framework of the UN/ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and we urge all Parties to the Convention expeditiously to take all appropriate steps to become Parties to the two Protocols, and voluntarily to take swift steps to implement and comply with the Protocols even before they formally enter into force.
23. We pledge to work constructively in the forthcoming negotiations on a global convention on POPs.

24. We intend to reduce our countries' emissions of lead, cadmium and mercury from a combination of industrial sources, transport, combustion processes and waste disposal and incineration and to be bound by all other obligations arising from the Protocol on Heavy Metals. We note that 32 countries have expressed their readiness in a separate declaration to meet an earlier date for the final phase-out of added lead in petrol for general use by road vehicles than stipulated in the Protocol (a copy of the Declaration is attached).
25. We strongly support the expeditious completion of a new protocol on nitrogen oxides and related substances to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, and we resolve to take the necessary steps to secure the scientific foundation for the effective implementation and the further development of existing cost-effective legal instruments to reduce transboundary air pollution in the UN/ECE region.
26. We welcome the Declaration of the Executive Body on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, recognizing the important role of the Convention in promoting a better environment and improved human health in Europe and North America (a copy of the Declaration as adopted is attached).
27. We note with satisfaction that the 1991 Protocol on the Emissions of VOC entered into force in September 1997 and that the 1994 Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions will enter into force in early August 1998. We urge the Signatories to the two Protocols that have not yet become Parties to them to do so as soon as possible.

STRATEGY TO PHASE OUT LEADED PETROL

28. We endorse the proposed strategy to phase out leaded petrol for general use by road vehicles as early as possible and no later than 1 January 2005, acknowledging, however, that four countries have reserved their position on the target date.⁴ We oblige ourselves to work towards the intermediate targets of the strategy and to evaluate their fulfilment at our next Ministerial Conference.
29. We will continue to endeavour to prevent possible increases in the overall emissions of harmful substances as a result of the lead phase-out.
30. We welcome and recognize the results of the cooperation among the CEE countries in phasing out lead from petrol and reducing local air pollution in the framework of the

⁴ During the Conference, one more country reserved its position on the target date.

Sofia Initiative on Local Air Quality led by Bulgaria. We call on the Project Preparation Committee (PPC) to make lead phase-out part of its future work in both the CEE and NIS regions.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY^{5,6}

31. We endorse the Policy Statement on Energy Efficiency (see Conference document ECE/CEP/47) and welcome the Guidelines on Energy Conservation in Europe (see Conference document ECE/CEP/47/Add.1) submitted by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, and we remain convinced that increased energy efficiency will be a major tool for fulfilling our commitments in the Kyoto Protocol.
32. In particular, we will promote action to reform energy markets and pricing to ensure there are cost-based prices and economic incentives that increasingly internalize the environmental costs of energy production and use. In this context we support all international activities to develop measures to reduce aircraft noise and air emissions. We furthermore support work towards the introduction of regulatory or fiscal measures in high-growth transport sectors such as aviation. We will promote action to progressively reduce and where possible remove energy price subsidies which counteract an efficient use of energy and/or have harmful effects on the environment by 2005.
33. We acknowledge the complex, cross-sectoral nature of energy efficiency policies and the need for the integration of those policies into other sectors, for instance in the field of housing, transport and industry. For energy efficiency policies to be effective, all relevant levels of government should ensure a strong and efficient coordination of policy measures.
34. We acknowledge the importance of international financing for effective energy conservation, and the development of renewable energy sources particularly in central and eastern Europe including the NIS countries, for example through the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the

⁵ Canada and the United States of America strongly support energy efficiency as a major tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They are firmly committed to continuing to increase energy efficiency. The endorsement of the Policy Statement on Energy Efficiency and the Guidelines on Energy Conservation in Europe would be inconsistent with a fundamental tenet of the Kyoto Protocol, to permit countries to meet environmental goals in accordance with national circumstances. Therefore, Canada and the United States of America cannot support paragraphs 31, 32 and 35.

⁶ Even though Turkey is not a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, it has similar concerns to those of the United States and Canada. Therefore, it cannot support paragraphs 31, 32 and 35 either.

European Investment Bank (EIB), and the EU PHARE and TACIS programmes. We urge the international bodies concerned to make energy conservation and efficiency a priority in their operational policies and project implementation guidelines.

35. We will promote action to strengthen international cooperation in monitoring the implementation of energy efficiency policies. Progress will be reported to the next «Environment for Europe» Conference.

PAN-EUROPEAN BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY STRATEGY

36. We acknowledge the Progress Report on the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, welcome the links which have been established with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and acknowledge the work undertaken under the Sofia Initiative led by Slovenia. We endorse the Resolution on Biological and Landscape Diversity (See Conference document ECE/CEP/54).⁷
37. We are aware that biological and landscape diversity, particularly in CEE and NIS, represents an important asset for Europe as a whole and express our concern about the increased pressure that risks to further deteriorate the situation. We resolve to strengthen and implement instruments for a better integration of biodiversity and landscape conservation objectives into sectoral policies at national and international levels, inter alia by developing appropriate economic and financial incentives.
38. In particular, we note that land use has a strong impact on biological and landscape diversity and that there are currently wide opportunities for progress as well as potential risks in this area. To take advantage of opportunities and to avoid negative impacts, we will take initiatives to integrate biodiversity considerations into the agricultural sector within the EU enlargement and transition processes.
39. We call on all participating States, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector to increase their support, as appropriate, for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, inter alia through the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, by exploring new and innovative financing means.

⁷ The United States of America welcomes and supports most elements of the Resolution on Biological and Landscape Diversity but cannot endorse it.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE ROLE OF NGOs

40. We regard the Aarhus Convention, which provides recognition for citizens' rights in relation to the environment, as a significant step forward both for the environment and for democracy. We encourage all non-signatory States to take appropriate steps to become Parties to the Convention.
41. We note the Resolution of the Signatories to the Convention (See Conference document ECE/CEP/43/Add.1/Rev).
42. We recognize and support the crucial role played in society by environmental NGOs as an important channel for articulating the opinions of the environmentally concerned public. An engaged, critically aware public is essential to a healthy democracy. By helping to empower individual citizens and environmental NGOs to play an active role in environmental policy-making and awareness raising, the Aarhus Convention will promote responsible environmental citizenship and better enable all members of society to fulfil their duty, both individually and in association with others, to protect and improve the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.⁸
43. The decision to hold a special dialogue with environmental NGOs during this Conference marks our recognition of their essential role, and our engagement to strengthen lines of communication between governments and NGOs, including in international fora. We recognize the new role played by NGOs in this Conference and we greatly appreciate their leadership in organizing and taking responsibility for the NGO session and in actively participating in Conference preparations.
44. We encourage countries to provide, as appropriate, practical and financial support for environmental NGOs, noting at the same time that part of the role of such groups can be to question government policies.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (EAP)

REFOCUSING ON THE NIS

45. We recognize the effective role that the EAP Task Force has played in promoting environmental policy reform and capacity building in CEE countries and NIS.

⁸ Germany is not able to sign the Convention at this Conference. The decision on the signature will be taken within the time provided in article 17 of the Convention. Therefore, Germany is not in the position to support paragraphs 40, 41 and 42. Azerbaijan, Turkey and Uzbekistan are in a similar situation.

Participation in the Task Force has helped applicant countries, and their EU partners, to launch a dialogue on the environment during the enlargement process. We also welcome and encourage the more active participation in, and greater ownership of the process by the NIS. Taking into account the dynamism of the EU enlargement process and the large resources that the European Commission, the Member States and the Applicant States will be devoting to it, we agree that the main focus of future EAP work should shift towards the CEE countries and the NIS that are not part of the pre-accession process. In these countries, the need for external support for project preparation and implementation capacities, as well as for strengthening the operations of national environmental funds, is the greatest.

46. National Environmental Action Programmes (NEAPs), environmental financing and environmental management in enterprises should continue to provide the framework for the activities of the EAP Task Force, but the work should be designed and implemented better to respond to the differentiated needs of CEE and the NIS groups of countries. We acknowledge with appreciation the secretariat support that the OECD has provided to the Task Force. The Regional Environmental Center (REC) in Szentendre, Hungary, should play an increasing role in supporting the Task Force work in central and eastern Europe involving the applicant and non-applicant countries.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCING AND ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS

47. We welcome the approaches outlined in the report «Environmental Financing in CEEC/NIS: Conclusions and Recommendations (See Conference document ECE/CEP/50) and note that it presents a very varied picture. Some CEE countries have mobilized resources for environmental investments which are equal to, or greater than, OECD averages as a share of GDP. In the NIS, however, sources of environmental finance are weak or non-existent. These countries should develop appropriate financing strategies. To this end, we endorse the recommendations of the Report on Environmental Financing. In particular, we call for the development of more effective approaches to link the policies and instruments required to create demand and raise domestic finance with the mechanisms which supply financial resources for projects.
48. Environmental financing must come primarily from domestic sources. Economic instruments should play a more important role in terms of motivating the polluters to reduce pollution at their own costs (the polluter-pays principle), as well as promoting sustainable development and integration of environmental concerns into sectoral policies and raising revenues for national environmental funds and other forms of public and private financing. In this connection we welcome the exchange of experience among the countries in the framework of the Sofia Initiatives on Economic Instruments led by the Czech Republic and the UN/ECE-OECD workshop on economic instruments held in 1997 in the Czech Republic.

49. External finance will provide important assistance for applicant countries to meet EU environmental requirements. The main challenges will be to establish the policy and institutional frameworks, and the project preparation capacities, to ensure that these resources address priorities cost-effectively. External financing will remain very important in those countries that have limited domestic funding sources, particularly the NIS. Donor countries and international financial institutions (IFIs) should take a more proactive approach and expand their support to these countries, especially in contributing to financing pilot and demonstration projects in response to the increasing demand. External financing will also be important to help CEE countries and NIS to achieve global transboundary environmental objectives.
50. We welcome the recent review of the PHARE Guidelines in which the environmental sector is now made a main priority. We are however concerned that the TACIS programme still lacks a corresponding environmental profile. We therefore call for a similar recognition to that of the PHARE programme in the coming revision of the TACIS Regulation, including the need for close cooperation with other donors and IFIs, as well as enhanced procedures for project handling. In this respect, greater transparency in all phases of the project cycle is vital. We also call for an improved dialogue between TACIS and the beneficiary countries in order to make better use of existing TACIS assistance for environmental purposes.
51. We note the environmental projects financed and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at national and regional level in CEE countries and NIS.
52. We acknowledge the role IFIs have played in supporting CEE countries and NIS in addressing their environmental problems. We strongly urge IFIs to improve substantially their profiles as catalysts in pursuing environmental investment projects in the economies in transition. We will be more proactive, *inter alia*, through IFIs' Executive Directors, in promoting more and better environmental projects in the CEE countries and NIS as well as mainstreaming environmental concerns into IFI project portfolios.
53. All partners - CEE countries and NIS, IFIs, donors and increasingly the private sector - should strengthen their efforts to mobilize and channel financial resources to resolve priority environmental problems in particular by cofinanced projects. The EAP Task Force and PPC should work to catalyse and facilitate these efforts, and to prepare a report assessing progress for the next "Environment for Europe" ministerial meeting.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMMES (NEAPs)

54. We welcome the report «Evaluation of Progress in Developing and Implementing National Environmental Action Programmes (NEAPs) in CEEC/NIS» (See Conference document (ECE/CEP/49)) prepared by the EAP Task Force, noting that the principles

of the EAP remain valid. However as economic growth resumes, and needs and priorities within the CEE and the NIS region become differentiated, these principles will have to be applied even more rigorously. In the EU applicant countries, substantial changes in legislation and institutions as well as massive investments will be required. Cost-effective strategies to develop and implement them will be of crucial importance to the process. As the other CEE countries and the NIS move from development to implementation of NEAPs, a focused, pragmatic, result-oriented approach is urgently needed to overcome the scarcity of resources available. In this regard we encourage the coordination of NEAPs with the National Environmental Health Action Plans (NEHAPs).

PROJECT PREPARATION COMMITTEE

55. We welcome the achievements of the PPC in the CEE countries. The PPC should respond to the particular need for external financing and for proactive coordination among clients, host governments, donors and IFIs in the NIS and the CEE countries which are not involved in the EU enlargement process. Its main activities should focus on these countries, whilst it continues its activities in the 10 CEE EU applicant countries. Within the NIS and in those CEE countries which are not involved in the EU enlargement process, the PPC should continue to work in close cooperation with the countries concerned as well as with the EAP Task Force and strengthen its work by locating PPC officers in the region.

BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT

56. We undertake to catalyse, facilitate and strongly support the implementation of effective environmental management in enterprises including cleaner production in CEE countries and NIS based on the recommendations in the Policy Statement on Environmental Management in Enterprises in CEE/NIS (See Conference document ECE/CEP/51). We will give increased priority to environmental management in enterprises within bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We urge business and industry, trade unions, environmental citizens' organizations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to work with us to these ends. We invite IFIs and international organizations to provide practical support for strengthening environmental management in enterprises in CEE countries and NIS. We urge donors, IFIs, CEE countries and NIS to create a business climate that will encourage the establishment of local private sector environmental goods and services companies in CEE countries and the NIS.
57. We welcome the opportunity within this Conference to extend a dialogue with prominent representatives of the business sector as well as the improved dialogue between industry and the environment set out at this year's CSD session. We confirm our willingness to establish this dialogue on a more continuous basis and invite the

business community to join us in this effort with the aim of promoting public private partnerships designed to achieve our common environmental objectives and more generally to promote sustainable development. We welcome the Message from the European Round Table of Industrialists on company investment in CEE countries, which identifies activities of good environmental practice that are also good business practice. We note with satisfaction that twinning arrangements between enterprises in west European countries and enterprises in CEE countries and NIS are being established to promote the transfer of environmental knowledge and experience in a most direct and practical way.

58. We invite the EAP Task Force to facilitate and support this process and to prepare, on the basis of the evaluation of progress made, a report for the next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference.

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRES (RECs)

59. We recognize the development of the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe in Szentendre, Hungary, into an independent body of an international character. It provides a significant capacity to assist in solving environmental problems of the CEE region through cooperation among governments, NGOs and business, promotion of free access to information and public participation in environmental decision-making. We welcome initiatives of beneficiary countries to actively support the work of the Center.
60. In view of the importance of the civil society and public participation for improving the environmental situation, we welcome and endorse the establishment of regional environmental centres in Chisinau, Kyiv, Moscow and Tbilisi. They are being established and operated as independent bodies that will promote cooperation among interested parties in addressing regional, transboundary and local environmental issues in an open and transparent way. We welcome the initiatives for increased environmental cooperation among the countries of Central Asia and their intention to establish a regional environmental centre. We encourage the founders and other interested parties to provide the necessary resources for the activities of the centres and to establish an international coordination committee to coordinate with the work of these new RECs. We also take note of the first steps to establish a new REC as an independent body of an international character in Istanbul and encourage further steps in consultation with other parties, including those within the region, concerning the establishment of this centre.^{9,10}

⁹ General reservation by Armenia.

¹⁰ Reservation on the last sentence by Cyprus and Greece.

E. FUTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE PROCESS

61. We are convinced that the "Environment for Europe" process has played an essential role in strengthening dialogue and cooperation in the environment field in Europe and in promoting sustainable development within the UN/ECE region. It has put the environment high on the agenda even in countries where the social and economic situation is unfavourable. The process has brought together a wide range of international organizations with an effective division of labour and channels of communications and collaboration between them. Environment is often seen as a model example of policy cooperation in Europe and we will strive to make it a model for the other continents of the world. The «Environment for Europe» process should build on the work done so far and, in particular, move forward from policy commitments to practical implementation.
62. We appreciate other ministerial processes concerned with the environment in Europe. We will take an active role within the follow-up to the ECE Conference on Transport and Environment, held in Vienna in November 1997, in particular by undertaking those actions which are foreseen in the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Joint Action. We welcome the Joint Work Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems 1997-2000 adopted by the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Lisbon, 2-4 June 1998. We look forward to the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in London in June 1999 and to achieving closer cooperation with the Environment and Health process, noting with satisfaction that a protocol to the UN/ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes is being prepared for this Conference with the aim of preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases by meaningful obligations. We welcome further processes of close cooperation like the ministerial conference on agriculture and environment which is under consideration in follow-up to the Integration of Biological and Landscape Diversity Objectives into Sectoral Policies (See Conference document ECE/CEP/53) and are committed to maximizing the benefit of these for the sake of the environment in Europe.
63. We consider that the broad institutional arrangements of Environment for Europe shall continue with the following adjustments:
 - Taking into account the importance and the comprehensive character of the «Europe's Environment: The Second Assessment», we call on the EEA together with existing national and international networks to update this information regularly and present the findings based on indicators to our future ministerial conferences in order to support decision-making.

- The ECE Committee on Environmental Policy should continue to screen the Environmental Programme for Europe, taking into account in particular the report «Europe's Environment: The Second Assessment», in order to implement priority actions on a pan-European level within the context of its long-term programme of work and to report on progress of this work at the next Ministerial Conference.
- The EAP Task Force and PPC shall reorient their work and focus more on the NIS and those CEE countries not included in the pre-accession process. The Regional Environmental Center in Szentendre shall overall assume a greater role in the Environment for Europe process and specifically work on the activities of the EAP Task Force in CEE countries. The EAP Task Force shall also cooperate with new RECs in the NIS region.
- The progress since Sofia in reducing the number of preparatory meetings shall be maintained.
- The frequency of ministerial conferences shall be reduced to an interval of four years. The next Conference shall take place in the year 2002 on the tenth anniversary of the Rio Conference.
- A special meeting of senior officials shall convene before the end of this year and shall at that meeting, chaired by the present host country, decide on the next host country, preferably in a NIS country, and the exact date of the next Conference. In this connection, we take note of the offers by Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to host the next conference.
- An ad hoc working group of senior officials shall convene two years before the next conference. This ad hoc working group shall serve as the coordinating body for the preparation of the substance for the next conference. The ad hoc working group shall be chaired by the host country of the next conference with the UN/ECE serving as secretariat.
- The work of this ad hoc working group of senior officials shall be prepared by an Executive Committee (EXECOM) composed of two senior officials from the CEE countries, two from the NIS and four from the western European countries. The Chairpersons of the UN/ECE Committee on Environmental Policy, the EAP Task Force, the PPC and the Council for the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, will participate as observers. It shall be chaired by the host country. The EXECOM shall also be established at the meeting of the ad hoc working group two years before the next conference. The practical preparations for the next conference shall be the responsibility of the host country.

64. We are committed to changing the negative trend in the state of the environment in the UN/ECE region and to monitoring progress at our next Conference in four years' time. In this connection it is essential to stop the continuous degradation of the environment in the whole of the UN/ECE region, with particular emphasis on the NIS and to maximize the environmental benefits of the EU enlargement process. We are convinced that increasing public participation in environmental decision-making is important to strengthen democracy in Europe, an aim which we are committed to pursuing.
65. We express our deep gratitude to the Government of Denmark for having hosted this Conference and we wish to thank it and its people for the warm hospitality we have received.

DECLARATION
On the Phase-out of Added Lead in Petrol

The Ministers/Heads of Delegations of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Who will sign the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution concerning Heavy Metals, *

Concerned that the emissions of lead from the use of leaded petrol are causing severe damage to the environment and to human health;

Aware that techniques are available to reduce air pollution by almost eliminating lead emissions from on-road vehicles;

Aware that many countries have already phased out the use of added lead in petrol or are well underway in the process of doing so and have prepared plans for completely phasing out leaded petrol;

Considering that, beyond the measures provided for in the Protocol, timely and more effective reductions of lead emissions from petrol are feasible;

Declare as follows:

1. The Signatories to this Declaration have already phased out or will phase out the use of added lead in petrol for general use by road vehicles as early as possible and not later than 1 January, 2005.
2. The Signatories call upon the other Parties to the Convention who will sign the Protocol to join them in making every effort to control and reduce substantially their national lead emissions by phasing out the use of added lead in petrol for general use by road vehicles as soon as possible.

In witness whereof the undersigned have signed this Declaration.

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* Adopted by the Executive Body for the Convention at its special session at the Aarhus Conference on 24 June 1998.

Ministerial Declaration on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

We, the Ministers and Senior Officials for the Environment from UN/ECE countries and the European Community, attending the Aarhus meeting as Parties to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution,

- * **NOTE** with serious concern that air pollutants, including hazardous chemical substances, continue to be transported in substantial amounts across national boundaries and over long distances, causing harm to human health and damage to ecosystems and natural resources of major environmental and economic importance;
- * **ARE RESOLVED** to continue and intensify our efforts to protect human health and the environment notwithstanding the pressure from other competing priorities. In so doing we take into account the positive effects that environmental policy may have on long-term economic activity and employment;
- * **RECOGNIZE** twenty years of successful cooperation between the Parties to the Convention, which sets an example for global action in environmental protection;
- * **CONSIDER** that the Convention is a key instrument for protecting our common environment by creating a scientifically based framework for gradually reducing the damage caused by air pollution to human health, the environment and the economy in the UN/ECE region;
- * **UNDERLINE** that the controls contained in the 1998 Protocols on Heavy Metals and Persistent Organic Pollutants constitute a significant step towards reducing emissions of substances that may cause adverse effects on human health or the environment;
- * **STRESS** the importance of all the requirements in the two Protocols and welcome the recent establishment of an Implementation Committee under the Executive Body for the Convention to assist in the review of compliance with the requirements of all Protocols to the Convention;
- * **ARE DETERMINED** to continue our efforts to further reduce the emissions of heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants by strengthening the measures on substances already included in the two Protocols as well as by adding new substances to the Protocols pursuant to Executive Body decisions 1998/1 and 1998/2;

- * **URGE** the Signatories to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants to strengthen their efforts, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to review the availability and feasibility of alternatives to DDT, and to promote the commercialization of safer alternatives;
- * **ENCOURAGE** countries to strengthen their efforts to identify and solve the environmental problems caused by the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and work together to assist countries with economies in transition in dealing with these problems;
- * **ARE ALSO DETERMINED** to cooperate closely under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme to develop, preferably by the end of the year 2000, a global legally binding instrument on the elimination or control of certain persistent organic pollutants, including appropriate support to meet the special needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, taking into account measures to control the transfrontier movement of such substances;
- * **CALL UPON** all Parties to the Convention, as well as international financial institutions, to support the implementation process of the new Protocols through bilateral and multilateral assistance to Parties with economies in transition, mindful that their implementation will require substantial efforts;
- * **ENCOURAGE** Parties to the Convention to sign and ratify the new Protocols without undue delay and to do their utmost to implement them, if possible, even before their entry into force;
- * **NOTE** the progress made in developing a multi-pollutant/multi-effects approach including the technical basis for a draft protocol on nitrogen oxides and related substances, including ammonia and volatile organic compounds, covering all relevant sectors, based on scientific information and cost-effective solutions, and support acceleration of the negotiation of an ambitious and realistic protocol, with a view to finalizing it by mid-1999;
- * **WELCOME** the proposal to designate the North Sea Area as an SO_x Emission Control Area under the MARPOL 73/78 Convention;
- * **SUPPORT** the future priorities of work under the Convention, as outlined by the Executive Body, with a focus on implementation and compliance as well as review and extension of existing protocols;
- * **ARE KEENLY AWARE** of the need to sustain the networks and capacities of the scientists and experts who have provided the scientific foundation for these protocols and for the obligations they lay down on national strategies, policies, programmes, measures and information, research, development and monitoring, and review by the Parties;

- * **DECIDE TO APPLY** the same high scientific requirements to the revision of existing protocols and the development of any new ones;

- * **RECOGNIZE** that effective implementation of protocols and further development of cost-optimal abatement measures require our full commitment and equitable cost-sharing between all stakeholders, for research into and monitoring of the effects of air pollutants on ecosystems and human health, for refining the science on which EMEP is based and for developing further integrated assessment modelling for those pollutants for which it is appropriate.