



# Espoo Convention

## EIA/SEA UPDATE

Issue No. 3, September 2004



### Welcome!

Welcome to the third issue of EIA/SEA UPDATE. The UPDATE provides a less formal means of letting you know what is happening with the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). You can find out more about the Convention and Protocol on the Convention web site, [www.unece.org/env/eia](http://www.unece.org/env/eia).

The previous UPDATE presented what was expected to happen in Cavtat (Croatia) during the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and the first meeting of the Signatories to the SEA Protocol. This UPDATE presents some of the outcomes. Changes were made to the draft work plan and budget and progress with these is presented below.

Shortly after the Cavtat meeting, the European Environment and Health Ministers met in Budapest, with a side event being held on the Protocol on SEA - more on this below.

### Danube-Black Sea Canal

The main event over the summer period was the request by **Romania** to establish an inquiry commission to advise on the likelihood of a significant adverse transboundary impact arising from the Danube-Black Sea Deep Water Navigation Canal in the Ukrainian Sector of the Danube Delta (Bystroe Canal). This is the first time the Convention's inquiry procedure has been applied. **Romania** and **Ukraine** have nominated their national experts who have now to designate the 'neutral' president of the commission.

The project was also the subject of informal consultations in Geneva at the invitation of Romania and the Ramsar Wetlands Convention secretariat. That meeting was attended by Romanian and Ukrainian delegations and several international organizations interested in the project. The secretariat has been invited to join a European Commission-led fact-finding mission to the Ukraine, 6-8 October. For the latest news on the inquiry commission, please refer to [www.unece.org/env/eia/inquiry.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/eia/inquiry.htm).



In July, Poland ratified the first amendment to the Espoo Convention, joining Germany and Luxembourg.

### Cavtat 2004

The Government of **Croatia** was the excellent host for the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention, including the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Signatories to the SEA Protocol, held in Cavtat from 1 to 4 June 2004. We were fortunate to have excellent, world-renowned speakers to distract us from the rain falling outside. *Our thanks again to them for their support of the Convention.* Presentations, statements, photographs and many other materials are available on the meeting web page: [www.unece.org/env/eia/cavtat.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/eia/cavtat.htm).

Besides the interesting presentations, and the meeting report, there were several practical outcomes from the Cavtat meeting, including:

- Guidelines on good practice and on bilateral and multilateral agreements - available on-line in English and Russian and in printed form in English, Russian and, soon, German;

- Guidance on public participation in transboundary EIA - available on-line in English and Russian;
- Guidance on subregional cooperation - available on-line in English and Russian;
- The Second amendment - available on-line, and in a consolidated version (with no legal status) of the Convention. The amendment has been sent to the UN Treaty Section in New York, so it should soon be open for ratification;
- The full Review of Implementation 2003 - available on-line.

## The Work Plan

The draft work plan was developed and then adopted in Cavtat. The following activities in the work plan have commenced:

- *Compliance with and implementation of the Convention:* the Committee received a submission from Romania regarding the Danube-Black Sea Canal project, but this has been suspended pending the inquiry commission's opinion. The next meeting of the Committee will be 3-5 November, with the provisional agenda to be published on the Convention's web site soon.
- *Exchange of best practice in transboundary EIA:* no progress.
- *Subregional cooperation to strengthen contacts between the Parties for transboundary EIA:* South-East Europe workshop to be held in Belgrade (**Serbia & Montenegro**), 18-19 November.
- *Transboundary EIA capacity-building in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA):* the first workshop, for Central Asia, will initiate drafting of guidance for capacity building. It will be held in Issyk-Kul (**Kyrgyzstan**), 5-7 October, with the support of **Switzerland** and the **OSCE**.
- *Examination of the substantive relationship between the Convention and the Protocol:* no progress.
- *SEA capacity-building needs analysis in EECCA:* the **UN Development Programme's** Regional Centre for

Europe and CIS together with the Regional Environmental Center for Central & Eastern Europe (**REC-CEE**) have begun their marathon series of workshops in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

- *Production of a capacity development manual, and provision of training, to support implementation of the SEA Protocol:* the secretariat and the **REC-CEE** have begun drafting of the manual, with technical support from the **European Commission**.
- *Institutional and procedural activities (Protocol on SEA):* no progress.

In addition, Parties and others have now been requested to send to the secretariat *information* relating to their implementation of the Convention and Protocol:

- Transboundary EIA cases (examples or statistics);
- National EIA authorities;
- National databases on transboundary EIA;
- Bilateral and multilateral agreements and arrangements; and
- Other information related to the implementation of the Convention.

Similar information has been requested regarding SEA, as well as information on capacity-building activities. How this information will be shared subsequently will depend on the level of response.

## The Budget



Approximately US\$78,000 out of US\$245,000 pledged for 2004 has been received so far - please continue to send in your contributions, whether or not pledged in Cavtat! We are also able to identify particular activities requiring funding, for those governments or institutions interested in direct funding, for example further subregional workshops on transboundary EIA capacity-building in EECCA countries.



## Environment & Health - Budapest

The Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health was held in Budapest in June. The conference Declaration included:

*13. We recall the UNECE Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context adopted and signed at the Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" held in Kiev from 21 to 23 May 2003, that acknowledges the benefits to the health and well-being of present and future generations that will follow if the need to protect and improve people's health is taken into account as an integral part of strategic environmental assessment. We commit ourselves to taking significant health effects into account in the assessment of strategic proposals under the Protocol.\**

The report of the side event on the Protocol organized by the **Czech Republic** in cooperation with **WHO**, **UNECE** and the **REC-CEE** is available via [www.unece.org/env/eia/health.html](http://www.unece.org/env/eia/health.html).

### IAIA meetings

The International Association for Impact Assessment (**IAIA**) will next year hold its annual meeting in Boston (USA), 31 May - 3 June 2005. The meeting is entitled 'Ethics & Quality'.

Supplementing the main meeting will be a special SEA event to be held in Prague, 26-30 September 2005, hosted by the **REC-CEE** and the Czech Agricultural University. It is expected that the Protocol on SEA will receive considerable attention at this event.

For details, see [www.iaia.org/Non\\_Members/Conference/conference.htm](http://www.iaia.org/Non_Members/Conference/conference.htm).

### Posters

Many of you will have received an information poster. Please contact the secretariat if you have the opportunity to make good use of additional copies of the poster, **now available in Russian** as well as English.

### Meeting Documents

Reports on the workshops and meetings described above may be found on the Convention web site, [www.unece.org/env/eia/](http://www.unece.org/env/eia/), together with other information on the Convention and SEA Protocol.

### Next UPDATE / Русский

We hope to produce issue number 4 of UPDATE early in 2005.

If you wish to contribute an article or news to UPDATE, please let us know - we will be as flexible as possible regarding deadlines.

We wish to publish UPDATE in English and Russian. Please contact the secretariat if you are able to assist by providing a free informal **Russian translation** of the English original.

\* Turkey has reservations on this paragraph since it is not a signatory to the Convention.

## Upcoming events

- 5-7 October 2004 Workshop on guidance for capacity building in EECCA region, Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan)
- 3-5 November 2004 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Implementation Committee, Geneva
- 10-12 November 2004 Bureau Meeting
- 18-19 November 2004 Workshop on subregional cooperation in South-East Europe, Belgrade (tentative dates)
- 25-29 April 2005 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group on EIA & 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on SEA, Geneva
- 31 May - 3 June 2005 IAIA annual meeting 'Ethics & Quality', Boston (USA)
- 26-30 September 2005 IAIA special thematic meeting 'International experience & perspectives in SEA', Prague



For a more complete and up to date listing of events, visit the Convention web site at [www.unece.org/env/eia](http://www.unece.org/env/eia).

### NOT AN OFFICIAL RECORD.

This EIA/SEA UPDATE provides informal information on the: Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, and Kiev Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.



**Your news and views would be very welcome.**

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