



Espoo Convention

EIA/SEA UPDATE

Issue No. 4, March 2005



Welcome!

Welcome to the fourth 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.

The previous UPDATE presented the outcomes, including a new work plan, of the 3rd meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and the first meeting of the Signatories to the SEA Protocol. This UPDATE describes many of the activities that have begun to implement that work plan (see also www.unece.org/env/eia/activities.htm).

Unfortunately, there are no new ratifications to report since the previous UPDATE.



Danube-Black Sea Canal

An inquiry commission has been established 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). The commission's president is emeritus professor Terwindt of Utrecht (the Netherlands). The commission met 26 January and again 24 February 2005. It should visit the Danube Delta in April and conclude its work in May 2005. For the latest news on the inquiry commission, please refer to www.unece.org/env/eia/inquiry.htm.

In addition, the UNECE secretariat was invited to join a **European Commission**-led fact-finding mission to the Ukraine, 6-8 October 2004. The mission report is available at the same web address.

Activities supporting the Espoo Convention

A start-up workshop on guidance for capacity building in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) was held in Issyk-Kul (**Kyrgyzstan**), 5-7 October 2004, with the support of Switzerland and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The participants from Central Asia helped draft the guidance, which will be discussed further at later workshops planned in Ukraine (2006) and Armenia.

Belgrade was the venue for the first meeting strengthening subregional cooperation, 16-17 December 2004.



Follow-up meetings in the subregion are planned in Skopje, in June 2005, and in Croatia. Further meetings on subregional cooperation are planned in other subregions: Mediterranean, Balkans and Black Sea, and Baltic Sea.

The secretariat requested information on countries' implementation of the Convention for inclusion on the web site - bilateral and multilateral agreements, lists of projects subject to transboundary EIA, EIA authorities, etc. Germany, Lithuania and the United Kingdom, together with the European Commission, have responded.

The guidelines on good practice and on bilateral and multilateral agreements are now available in

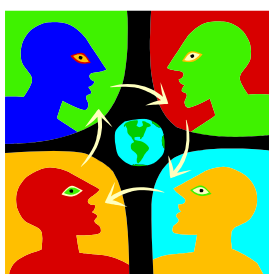
the published format in English, German and Russian. A French version in the same format, but not printed, is now available in electronic format courtesy of **Switzerland**.

Activities supporting the Protocol on SEA

The **UN Development Programme's** Regional Centre for Europe and CIS, together with the Regional Environmental Centre for Central & Eastern Europe (**REC-CEE**), completed their capacity-building needs analysis workshops in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Subregional and country reviews will be presented at the April meetings under the Convention. UNDP has also initiated a series of pilot SEAs in the five countries. Capacity-building action plans are expected to be developed in the autumn.

Meanwhile, REC-CEE, UNDP and the secretariat, with technical support from the **European Commission**, have produced a draft capacity development manual to support implementation of the Protocol on SEA. Their work was reviewed at two workshops: on 2 December 2004 in Brussels with EU Member States, Iceland and Norway; and on 21-22 February 2005 in Szentendre (Hungary), with countries of south-east Europe. These workshops have led to significant improvements in the manual. A third workshop, for the Caucasus subregion, is planned for 21-22 April 2005, in Tbilisi.

April 2005 meetings



The end of April will be busy. Just after the Tbilisi workshop, the second meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol will be held in Geneva, 25-26 April.

The meeting of the Working Group on EIA will start on Wednesday 27 April with a workshop organized by Switzerland on transboundary projects - projects that involve development on both

sides of national borders. The workshop falls under the work plan activity 'Exchange of best practice in transboundary EIA'. On the Wednesday afternoon, and continuing till 29 April, the Working Group on EIA will discuss items related to the work plan. The provisional agendas for the meetings are available on the Convention's web site.

Implementation Committee

The new Implementation Committee has been busy, meeting 3-5 November 2004, in Geneva, and again 3-4 March, in **Helsinki**. The Committee has been started its activities, as outlined by the Meeting of Parties to the Convention, and has made good progress with revising and simplifying the questionnaire on implementation - now in the form of a national report. For more information, see www.unece.org/env/eia/implementation.htm.

The Budget



Approximately US\$205,000 out of US\$245,000 pledged for 2004-2005 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, or capacity-building in EECCA countries.

IFC policy review



The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has embarked on an integrated review of its Safeguard Policies, Policy on Disclosure of Information, and Environmental, Health & Safety Guidelines. The review includes opportunities for public consultation, now extended to 29 April 2005 - to comment see

<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/policyreview.nsf/content/home>. The IFC guidelines are used as the basis of the 'Equator Principles', adopted by leading financial institutions (banks such as Bank of America, Citigroup, HSBC and ING) for managing environmental and social issues in project finance lending. It would be important to include the principles of the Convention and its Protocol in these guidelines.

UNECE comprehensive review

At its session last year (the 59th) the Commission decided to "commission a comprehensive report on the state of the UNECE with the aim of developing recommendations to determine what changes to the role, mandate and functions of the UNECE might be necessary in the light of the changes in the European institutional architecture since the creation of the UNECE". A review team has now begun working to prepare the draft report.



Latest on EIA and SEA in World Bank Operations

by Jean-Roger Mercier, World Bank

The first major event since the summer of 2004 was the adoption in August by the Bank of a converted Development Policy Lending (DPL - OP/BP 8.60) policy, which substitutes for the former Adjustment policy and which requires the Bank to assess the quality and relevance of existing analytical work on the country/sector where DPL has been requested by the Government, and to determine whether additional analytical work, in majority in the form of Country Environmental Analysis (CEA) or other Strategic Environmental Assessment tools. The Environmental Department of the Bank assists in the implementation of OP/BP 8.60, which applies to about 30% of Bank lending and closely monitors the impact of the new policy on CEA and SEA preparation.

The second major event was the adoption in February 2005 of the policy on Country Systems, which promotes an increased use of

borrower's national EIA and other environmental and social policies requirements and institutions. At the Second High Level Forum on Harmonization and Alignment in Paris (March 2005), the World Bank President has presented the new policy and announced the launching of a two-year programme involving fourteen pilot studies. The implications of the new Country Systems policy on borrower's capacity development are being assisted and closely monitored by the Environmental Department. In later news, the Bank will report on the progress of the preparation and dissemination of an SEA Toolkit for Capacity Building.

Gender representation



The number of female officers for Espoo (chairs, vice-chairs, and members of the Bureau and Implementation Committee) has dropped slightly 'post-Cavtat', from 44% to 40%. But the number of female chairs has risen from 0% to a perfect 50% (2 of 4). 60% of the staff of the UNECE's Environment & Human Settlements Division are women.

SEA capacity building and pilot study in Armenia

by Nune Darbinyan, Eco-Globe

An SEA capacity-building activity was included in the annual programme for 2003-2004 of the NGO Eco-Globe, so as to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol on SEA in Armenia. Capacity building in SEA and a pilot assessment had been defined as priorities, based on Eco-Globe's involvement in the Espoo Convention and in the development of the Protocol on SEA, as well as on the conclusions of consultations held with governmental agencies, NGOs and scientists in Armenia, which were:

- Lack of familiarity among policy- and decision-makers with SEA methodology and procedures,

- Low awareness in environmental NGOs and civil society about their rights and their role in the SEA process, and
- Lack of SEA training for specialized consulting companies and scientists.

Eco-Globe carried out the programme with the support of the Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment. A Norwegian Expert trained specialists from the Armenian Parliament, Ministries and Government agencies, environmental NGOs and scientists, and the specialists prepared to run independently the SEA pilot assessment on a model programme. The results of the training and pilot study, as well as the Convention and Protocol and their importance and significance, were introduced and discussed during a seminar in Yerevan in March 2004. The results of activity and the lessons learned were published in English and Armenian and widely disseminated among the national and international community in Armenia and abroad.

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IAIA meetings

The International Association for Impact Assessment (**IAIA**) will 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.

Meeting Documents

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

Next UPDATE / Русский

We hope to produce issue number 5 of UPDATE later 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.

The previous edition of UPDATE was translated courtesy of the NGO **EcoGlobe** - our thanks to them. 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.

Upcoming events in 2005

4-5 April	Training workshop on use of the Guidelines on EIA in a Transboundary Context in the Caspian Sea Region, Baku
21-22 April	Subregional review workshop on the capacity-building manual for the Protocol on SEA, Tbilisi
25-26 April	2 nd Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on SEA, Geneva
27-29 April	8 th Meeting of the Working Group on EIA, Geneva, beginning with a workshop on best practice in transboundary EIA, focussing on transboundary projects
31 May - 3 June	IAIA annual meeting 'Ethics & Quality', Boston (USA)
June 2005	Workshop on subregional cooperation in South-east Europe, Skopje (tentative)
July 2005	2 nd meeting on the Protocol on Transboundary EIA under the Caspian Sea Convention, Teheran (tentative)
26-30 September	IAIA special thematic meeting 'International experience & perspectives in SEA', Prague
14-15 November	8 th Meeting of the Implementation Committee, Geneva



For a more complete and up to date listing of events, visit the Convention web site at 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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