

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Twenty-sixth session

Geneva, 9–11 November 2020

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

Information paper no. 12

Decisions taken by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (informal record)

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its twenty-second session (27 October 2020), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment took decisions and made recommendations *ad referendum* as informally recorded below. The Working Group's decisions were then subject to special procedures adopted by the ECE Executive Committee on 5 October 2020 (ECE/EX/2020/L.2), from 2 to 5 November 2020. The procedures apply to meetings of sectoral committees, bodies reporting directly to the Executive Committee and working parties.

These procedures stipulate that “as part of the special procedures established for the COVID-19 pandemic period, conclusions, recommendations or decisions considered and agreed *ad referendum* at these formal meetings with remote participation shall be circulated through all Geneva Permanent Representations, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the Appendix III of document E/ECE/1464 (Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies), for approval by silence procedure of 72 hours by the participating delegations of the above meetings”.

I. Adoption of the Agenda

1. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/1/Rev.1.

II. Adoption of the report of the twenty-first session

2. The Working Group adopted the report of its twenty-first session as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2019/2.

III. Implementing the mandate and terms of reference

3. The Working Group:

(a) Adopted the timetable of activities for 2021 as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/3/Rev.1, while recognizing that it might need to be adjusted in the light of a possible change to the timing of the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference;

(b) Requested the secretariat to prepare an informal document for the next session of the Committee on Environmental Policy setting out the necessary changes to the annual timetable of activities 2021 if the next ministerial conference is rescheduled to 2022.

4. The Working Group:

(a) Took note of the financial resources available for the implementation of activities under the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Programme;

(b) Requested its members and the secretariat to continue their fundraising efforts to enable the full implementation of activities planned for 2021, including for preparation of the pan-European environmental assessment.

5. The Working Group:

(a) Took note of information provided on other international projects that are related to the activities of the Working Group;

(b) Invited its members and representatives of other projects to provide regular updates to the Working Group on recent developments in project implementation.

6. The Working Group:

(a) Requested the secretariat to inform the Committee on Environmental Policy of the Working Group's wish to extend its current mandate and terms of reference until at least 2022, if the next ministerial conference is rescheduled to 2022;

(b) Also requested the secretariat to prepare a document setting out the extension of the current mandate and terms of reference and to present it at the next session of the Working Group.

IV. Reporting on the Shared Environmental Information System to support a regular process of environmental assessment

7. The Working Group:

(a) Adopted the revised outline of the final review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/5/Rev.1);

(b) Took note of the revised timeline, due to the limited number of self-assessments submitted, for the Shared Environmental Information System final progress review and requested all member States to submit their self-assessments by 15 December 2020 at the latest to the secretariat through the use of the Shared Environmental Information System online tool;

(c) Requested the secretariat to inform the Committee on Environmental Policy of the outcomes of the Working Group's discussion on the Shared Environmental Information System final progress review and invited the Committee's support in mobilizing member States to submit their self-assessments;

(d) Requested the secretariat to prepare a revised version of the document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/7 (Draft final progress review report on the establishment of the Shared Environmental Information System), based on additional self-assessments submitted by member States for the Working Group's next session.

8. The Working Group took note of the finalized publication “Guidelines on the SEIS reporting mechanism”.

V. Regular pan-European environmental assessment supported by the Shared Environmental Information System

9. The Working Group:

(a) Approved the final outline of the pan-European assessment set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.10/2020/6/Rev.1, while noting that it may not be possible to address all environmental themes listed, themes need to be addressed in an integrated manner and the pandemic should be taken into consideration in the assessment;

(b) Took note of the status and timeline for the next pan-European environmental assessment;

(c) Requested the secretariat to inform the Committee on Environmental Policy on the outcomes of this agenda item and the suggestions made for the pan-European assessment;

(d) Also requested its members to provide information on partners, indicators and case studies to the secretariat by 15 November 2020;

(e) Further requested an update on the assessment at its next session.

VI. Sharing and integration of economic, social and environmental data with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

10. The Working Group invited its members to submit suggestions and answers to the questions on agenda item 6 related to “Sharing and integration of economic, social and environmental data with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” in written form to the secretariat by 15 November 2020.

VI. Other business and closure of the meeting

11. The Working Group adopted the decisions taken during the session *ad referendum*.

12. The next meeting of the Working Group will be held from 3 to 4 May 2021 in Geneva.