

## ALBANIA 50TH PARTY TO THE CONVENTION!



On 2 December 2005 Albania lodged its instrument of ratification with the United Nations Depository in New York. Following the required period of 30 days Albania will become the 50th Party to the Convention on 2 March 2006. We are sure that all Parties will join with the secretariat in welcoming Albania, and we look forward very much to meeting Albanian experts and delegates at our future meetings.

### Twenty-third session of the Executive Body

The Executive Body held its twenty-third session in Geneva on 12-15 December 2005. Following the excitement of the previous year's session, where we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention, we might have expected a more relaxed atmosphere. However, with the entry into force of the Gothenburg Protocol in 2005 and several challenging decisions facing delegations, the twenty-third session was full of action and expectations for the future.

The report of the session is already available in English at [www.unece.org/env/eb](http://www.unece.org/env/eb) but below we summarize some highlights of the session.

### Gothenburg Protocol review starts

The first meeting of the Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol took place at the twenty-third session of the Executive Body. As required by the Protocol, its first review was initiated, and plans were made for its completion at the twenty-fifth session of the Executive Body in December 2007.

Preparations prior to the review, including work done by experts on the European Commission's Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution, will provide a useful starting point for the work. Even so, the Executive Body called on all Parties to support the necessary scientific activities by providing the required data. It invited all bodies of the Convention to plan their work for the review.

The Working Group on Strategies and Review was requested to develop and evaluate options for addressing the long-range transport of particulate matter (PM) and ozone (precursors), and this could take into account issues of relevance to climate change.

The Working Group will hold a Heads of Delegations session on 19-21 April (see page 6) to plan for the review. Delegates will discuss an outline of a review report that indicates the outputs required by the Convention's subsidiary bodies.



### Gothenburg Protocol adjustment paves way for Cyprus' accession

Following a request from Cyprus, the Executive Body agreed to adjust annex II of the Gothenburg Protocol to include Cyprus' name and a set of emission ceilings for sulphur, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOCs and ammonia for 2010. Such an adjustment was only possible after the entry into force of the Protocol.

The secretariat has now informed Parties of the adjustment, so Cyprus will be able to accede to the Protocol in April 2006 (90 days after the notification was sent). We look forward to receiving Cyprus' instrument of ratification in due course.



*Cyprus takes a step to protect its environment*

### New critical loads data become available

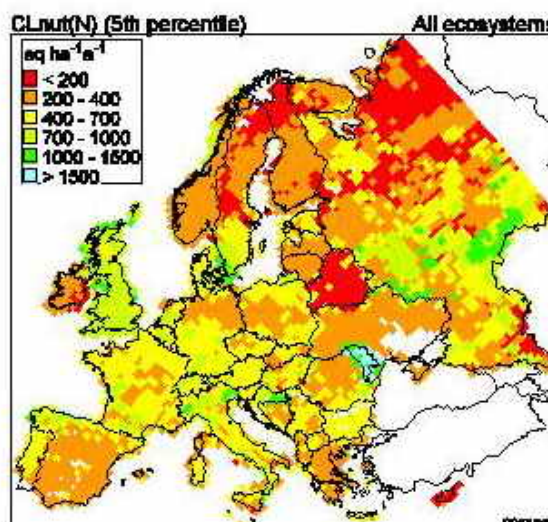
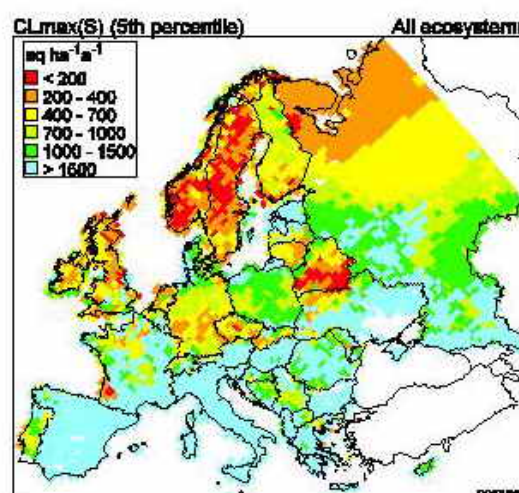
The Executive Body learned that European critical and target loads had been updated by the Working Group on Effects in 2005. Using the new ecosystem-specific deposition maps developed by EMEP, calculations showed that critical loads for acidification and eutrophication were currently exceeded over ecosystem areas of about 10% and 30% respectively.

The Executive Body was also informed that 18 Parties had submitted critical loads for heavy metals. They covered the effects of cadmium, lead and mercury on ecosystem functioning and human health via terrestrial and aquatic receptors.

Fourteen Parties have used dynamic acidification models to calculate target loads. These calculations

identify the deposition required to protect an ecosystem by a specified target year. Such target loads are lower than critical loads. Even so, results suggest that recovery can be achieved before 2050 in a significant proportion of areas at risk.

All critical and target loads were confirmed to be ready for use in work under the Convention.



*New critical loads maps for acidity (above) and for nutrient nitrogen (below) are now available. The maps shown combined data for all ecosystems, but maps for individual ecosystems are also available.*

### First review of POPs Protocol completed

The Executive Body and the Parties to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) were informed of the work of the Task Force on POPs that had been presented to the Working Group on Strategies and Review earlier in the year. The twenty-third session considered the technical elements of the “sufficiency and effectiveness” review prepared by the Task Force and agreed that the first review of the Protocol had been completed.



### Proposals for new POPs

The Executive Body considered a “track A” review report on two substances, PFOS and PeBDE, that had been proposed for addition to the Protocol by Sweden and Norway, respectively, in 2004. The review was to determine whether the substances met the criteria for POPs as defined in Executive Body decision 1998/2. The Executive Body agreed that the two substances were POPs and requested the Task Force on POPs to complete track B reviews to identify management options for them.

In 2005 the European Commission had proposed five more substances for addition to the Protocol: HCB, OctaBDE, PeCB, PCNs and SCCPs. The Executive Body requested the Task Force to initiate track A reviews of these substances.

The secretariat made the new substances’ dossiers available on the Convention’s website and invited submission of additional information and comments prior to the Executive Body session. Information and comments received are also on the website, and the proposing Party is invited to

make a summary that can be taken into account in the review process.

### Amendments to the POPs Protocol

The Executive Body discussed future amendments to the Protocol on POPs. It agreed to set up an ad hoc group of legal experts to prepare a discussion paper on mechanisms for amending the Protocol. The options to be considered will include opt-out and the current opt-in procedures as well as the possibilities for individual ratification of chemicals. The group of legal experts will report to the session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in September.

### Convention still struggles with funding mechanism

The Executive Body set about considering the effectiveness of its decision 2002/1 on funding of core activities not covered by the EMEP Protocol.

The decision required review of the voluntary funding process at this session, especially with regard to considering the possibilities for a funding protocol. The secretariat had prepared information to show the annual contributions made over the past six years.

The total contributions in cash had risen from 2000 but had levelled off at about US\$400,000 annually. This was compared with a budget in the region of US\$2 million. The number of contributing Parties had clearly increased after 2002, from 23 to 34, but this had not contributed significantly to the overall cash contribution. Many payments made were less than the figures recommended.

The Executive Body agreed that decision 2002/1 had not been an effective mechanism for securing long-term funding for its effects work and integrated assessment modelling. It requested the Working Group on Strategies and Review to look into the matter further and report back to it in 2006.



*Pass the hat around for voluntary funds? Or can the Working Group on Strategies and Review come up with something better?*



### Positive steps to compliance with protocols, but major efforts still needed by some Parties

The Executive Body listened with interest to the annual report from its Implementation Committee.

Delegates were pleased to hear that Italy and Ireland were now in compliance with their obligations under the VOC Protocol and the NO<sub>x</sub> Protocol respectively. The case for Italy had been referred in 2001 and that for Ireland in 2002.

The Executive Body noted that two more Parties, Norway and Slovenia, were close to achieving compliance. Norway expected to reduce its emissions to comply with its obligations under the VOC Protocol by 2006. In Slovenia, the Trebovlje thermal power plant had started to operate with desulphurization equipment in October 2005; this would bring Slovenia into compliance with its obligations under the 1994 Sulphur Protocol.

Two Parties remained in non-compliance and will have to undertake additional steps. Spain will continue its efforts to pursue new initiatives, policies and measures to decouple economic growth from emissions increase and thus achieve compliance with its obligations under the Protocol on NO<sub>x</sub> and the Protocol on VOC. Greece was invited, when deciding on the measures it would take, to consider areas with high potential for achieving reductions of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, for instance the renewal of its vehicle fleet and in particular its heavy-duty lorries and buses.



Decisions of the Executive Body related to compliance can be found in document ECE/EB.AIR/89/Add.1 on the Convention's website (under Executive Body/Documents).

### Emission inventory review programme approved

As Parties put the finishing touches on their annual emission reports (the 2004 data are due by 15 February 2006), they should remember that data quality is increasingly important to the success of the Convention. The Executive Body, the Implementation Committee, the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the EMEP Steering Body have all emphasized the need for high-quality, comprehensive, timely and reliable emission data.

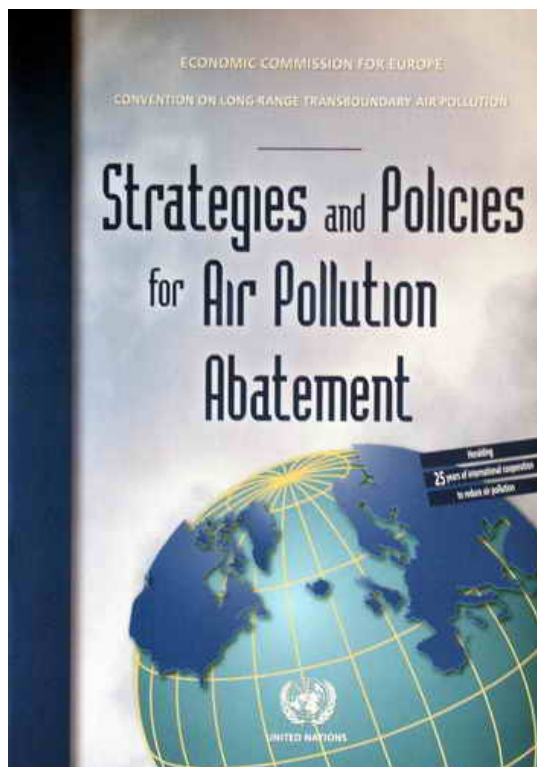


To improve data quality, the Executive Body in December approved new procedures for reviewing reported emission data. The procedures, proposed by the EMEP Steering Body and its Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections (see EB.AIR/GE.1/2005/7, annex III), will start being implemented by the Task Force this spring.

A new Review Team of Experts, made up of a Co-Chair of the Task Force together with the Heads (or designated representatives) of the EMEP Centres together with other experts invited by the Co-Chairs (e.g. experts from the EEA), will review Parties' submitted emission data in April-May. It will report its findings to the Task Force, which will in turn report to the EMEP Steering Body.

In addition, an in-depth review process has been established. This will start this spring on a trial basis using data from selected countries. Depending on the findings of the trial and on proposals for topics for future in-depth reviews, the Task Force and Steering Body will develop plans to put before the Executive Body in December 2006.

These activities are new steps for developing the high-quality emission data that are so important for the future success of the Convention.



### 2006 Strategies and Policies Questionnaire available on the Internet

The Internet-based questionnaire on strategies and policies for air pollution abatement is up and running as of 31 January 2006. The Executive Body approved a total of 72 questions and these are now awaiting answers from national experts.

Forty-nine of the questions are directly related to the Protocols in force. The replies to these will be used by the Implementation Committee to determine compliance with reporting obligations on strategies and policies. The Committee has carefully considered the wording of these questions to tie the questions more closely to the legal obligations of Parties under the various protocols.

The remaining 23 questions are of a general nature and optional. This year, Parties are asked about their air pollution legislation and regulations, multi-pollutant and co-benefit approaches, economic incentives and product regulation. There are also a series of sector-specific questions on transport, energy and agriculture.

To get a sense of future directions in air pollution policy, Parties are asked what their highest priorities are concerning air quality issues, including priorities on regional cooperation and international agreements, covering, for example PM, hemispheric transport, POPs and mercury. Parties are asked to report measures taken to communicate information about air pollution to the general public. (For example, do they alert the public when poor air quality is predicted?) The replies to the questions will be summarized in a draft review publication to be presented to the Executive Body at its twenty-fourth session in December 2006.

### First review of Heavy Metals Protocol continues

The Task Force on Heavy Metals continues to make progress in reviewing the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals. The necessary evaluations of emission limit values were completed for existing chlor-alkali plants and mercury-containing emissions from medical waste incineration.

The Task Force prepared generic guidelines for the review of additional heavy metals, product control measures or products/product groups proposed by Parties for inclusion in the Protocol. The Executive Body agreed to use these for any future such proposals.



An informal editorial group has continued work on the sufficiency and effectiveness review at a meeting held in Dessau (8-10 February 2006). The draft review will be finalized at the third meeting of the Task Force in Tallinn (29 May - 1 June 2006) and

submitted to the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its thirty-eighth session.

### New rules for data are planned

The Working Group on Effects in collaboration with the EMEP Steering Body will be drawing up new rules for data in time for the Executive Body session at the end of 2006. Existing data rules are being revised to clarify the situation, where various procedures exist among the groups.

Earlier guidance was based on two formal decisions in 1994 and 1998. The Bureaux of the Working Group on Effects and EMEP are preparing to propose a harmonized management to ensure continuous motivation of Parties to collect data, the quality of released data, and intellectual rights of scientists. New rules would also ascertain that undue resources by national and programme centres are not wasted for work outside the scope of the Convention.



### Working Group on Strategies and Review Heads of Delegation meeting

The forthcoming Meeting of the Heads of Delegation to the Working Group on Strategies and Review (19-21 April 2006 in Geneva) will discuss detailed planning for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol. The review was initiated at the twenty-third session of the Executive Body in December 2005 and has to be completed in time for its twenty-fifth session in December 2007. The review will assess the adequacy of the obligations of the Protocol for achieving its objective in view of the latest scientific information. The results will be presented in a report to the Executive Body.

The implementation of the action plan for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) agreed by the Executive Body at its twenty-third session will also be discussed at the meeting.

Delegates will be invited to consider the support their countries might provide on a technical and/or financial level. The Working group has to report on this issue to the twenty-fourth session of the Executive Body in December.

The meeting will further discuss the issue of funding with the aim of finding more effective alternatives to Executive Body decision 2002/1.

### Goodbye to old friends

The Executive Body sadly bid goodbye to some of the Convention's long-serving officers who stepped down at the twenty-third session.

**Harald Dovland** (Norway) has been Chair of the Executive Body since 2000 but has been involved with the work of the Convention and EMEP from their earliest days. Indeed, he penned the first article in the first issue of "Monitair" - a newsletter on monitoring activities under the Convention - that was started in 1988. Harald's early interests were focused on the monitoring activities in EMEP though he spent a period working with the secretariat in Geneva. In recent years, with his move to the Norwegian ministry, Harald has been involved in the Convention's policy development. His in-depth knowledge of the Convention and its use of science to develop abatement strategies has provided valuable leadership for the Executive Body by a Chair who is universally liked and respected by delegations. We hope to see Harald in the Norwegian delegation at future Convention meetings.



**David Stone** (Canada), Co-Chair of the Task Force on POPs, has provided us with guidance and leadership on POPs issues since the early 1990s. He chaired the Task Force and ad hoc Working Group leading up to adoption of the 1998 Protocol on POPs and co-chaired the Expert Group and Task Force on POPs in more recent years. We shall greatly miss his in-depth knowledge and his quiet, diplomatic approach to leadership. Canada has appointed Cheryl Heathwood to replace David as Co-Chair of the Task Force.



**Patrick Széll** (United Kingdom), Chair of the Implementation Committee since 1999, is retiring from the international scene, where he has been a



legal expert since the days before the adoption of the Convention. He has been involved in the drafting of the Convention and its protocols and has provided expert guidance on legal matters throughout the Convention's history. His skill in chairing and

presenting results from drafting groups as well as reporting on the work of the Implementation Committee has won acclaim from delegations. The Executive Body expressed its sincere thanks to Patrick, and we all wish him well in his retirement. The new Chair of the Committee is Stephan Michel (Switzerland).

**Peggy Farnsworth** (Canada) has also stepped down as Vice-Chair of the Executive Body. Since her election in 2001, Peggy has ensured that Canada has played an active role in the work of the Convention, especially in recent years, supporting the Convention's EECCA activities. Peggy's place on the Executive Body Bureau will be taken by Bill Harnett (United States).

### New Chair of the Executive Body

**Martin Williams** (United Kingdom) from the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), is a former Chair of the EMEP Steering Body and Vice-Chair of the Executive



Body. He was re-elected to the Executive Body Bureau last December. Like Harald Dovland, Martin has a long association with EMEP and the Convention's scientific work. He has been involved in policy

matters through his recent work in DEFRA.

### Syracuse workshop reviews status of air management in Europe

The EU held a workshop in Syracuse, Italy on 9-11 December 2005 to identify the future challenges for the air pollution community. While focusing on the European Commission's Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution, the workshop had many participants who are involved with the Convention, including two Vice-Chairs of the Executive Body, Martin Williams (United Kingdom) and Andrzej Jagusiewicz (Poland).

The workshop highlighted the new approaches needed for efficient control of the ensemble of pollutants contributing to the PM problem. Human exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> in particular may need a new and complex approach. A full report will be available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/air/cafe>.

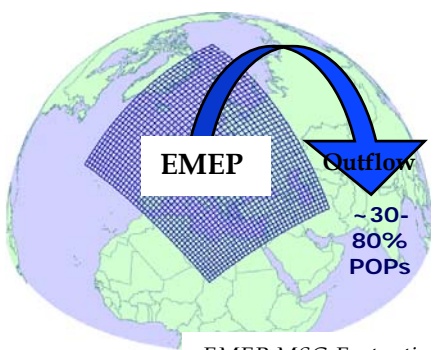


*Andrzej Jagusiewicz provides a Convention perspective to the Syracuse workshop*

**Modellers discuss hemispheric transport**

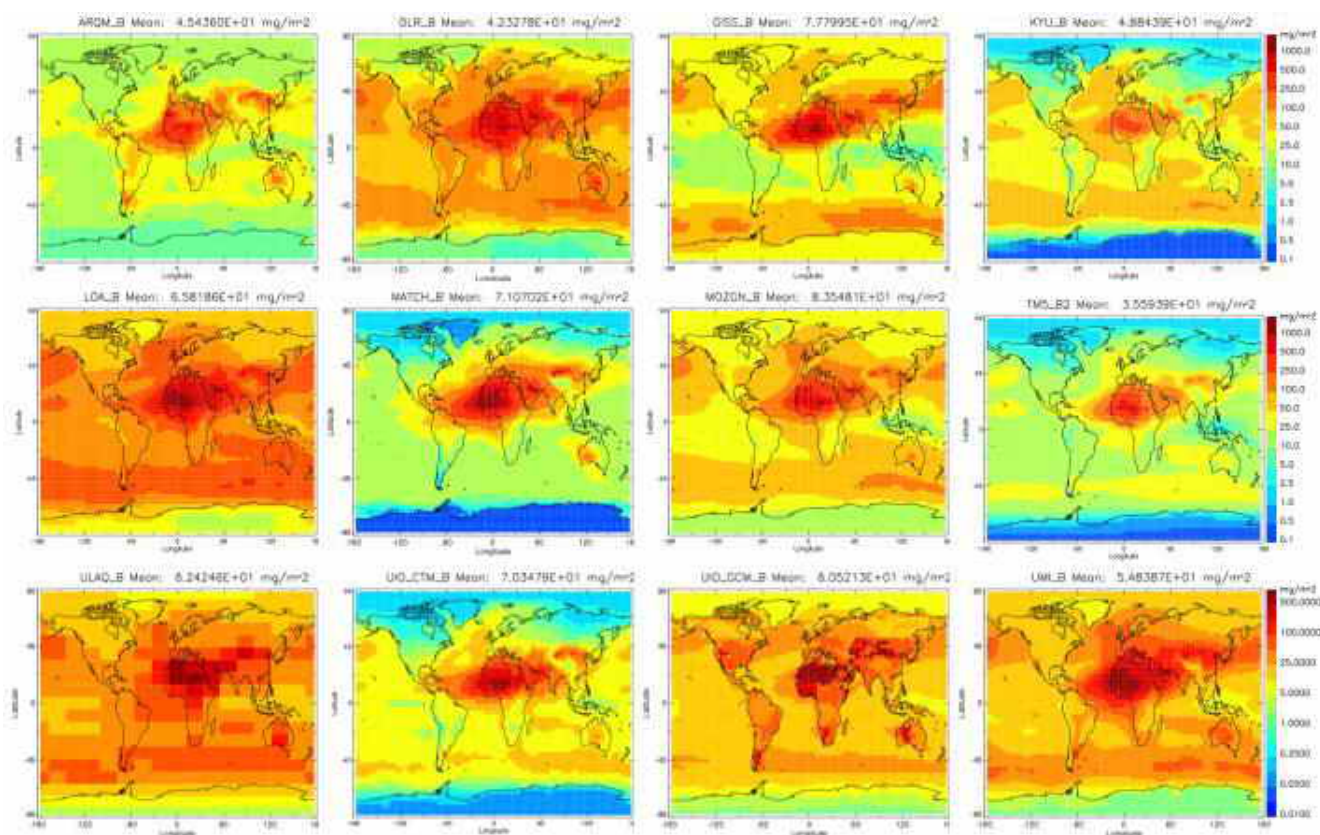
The Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution held a workshop in Washington, D.C. in January to consider how it might carry out a comparison of intercontinental pollution transport models. More than 90 participants from 20 countries attended, including experts from Japan, the Republic of Korea, India and the Philippines, which lie outside the UNECE region.

Participants discussed lessons that could be learned from past model intercomparison and evaluation studies and how the Task Force might apply such lessons in its work towards an assessment of intercontinental transport, as requested by the Convention. They considered the possible cooperative modelling studies that could feed into an assessment of intercontinental transport as well as the information integration tasks needed to support the modelling work (e.g. integration of data on observations and emissions).



EMEP MSC-East estimates that between 30% and 80% of POPs and mercury emissions in the EMEP region are transported out of the region [Courtesy of MSC-East]

The Task Force is working to organize cooperative modelling studies to provide input to an assessment report planned for 2009. Outlines for this report and for an interim report targeted at the Gothenburg Protocol review in 2007 are to be forwarded to the Task Force for consideration at its meeting in June of this year.



Various global model predictions of total column aerosol loadings (mg/m<sup>2</sup>) from the AEROCOM intercomparison exercise using the same emissions inventory in each model [Courtesy of Michael Schulz]



### Ozone, heavy metals and vegetation

The 19th meeting of the Task Force of the International Cooperative Programme (ICP) on Vegetation (30 January – 2 February, Caernarfon, Wales) agreed to assess ozone flux impacts with generic crop and tree species in integrated modelling. It also decided to collaborate with EMEP/MSC-W to calculate impacts on some real plant species this coming autumn. The Task Force strengthened its biomonitoring programme with plans for regional centres. It also agreed to collate and analyse available information on ozone impacts on vegetation.



The Task Force took note of the intermediate results from the European heavy metals and nitrogen in mosses survey 2005/2006. It discussed possible extensions to the work, including assessment of impacts of heavy metals on vegetation.

### Integrated assessment modelling discussions in Gothenburg

The Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling held its thirty-first meeting on 8–9 December 2005 in Gothenburg, Sweden. Experts discussed options for improving environmental protection using different impact indicators, including the paths that might be followed to reduce impacts.

The Task Force also discussed the possibilities for deriving various gap closure methods: which year and what emissions to use as a starting point. The deliberations also highlighted ways to indicate realistic and comparable improvements in effects, gap closure percentage and marginal reduction costs by

reaching deposition targets based on technical scenarios or critical loads.



A workshop on non-technical measures to reduce air pollution emissions, held back to back with the meeting, identified several structural measures that could increase the potential for environmental improvement. Other measures, such as behavioural changes and local solutions in the agricultural and traffic sectors, were still important, but were difficult to include in integrated assessment models.

### Introducing the Bureau of the Working Group on Effects

The Bureau of the Working Group on Effects will hold the first of its two main annual meetings in March. The Bureau consists of the Chair and five Vice-Chairs who are elected by the Working Group at its autumn session. Membership generally reflects the geographic scope of the Convention and the work of the effects-oriented activities.

At its meetings the Bureau is often supported by the Chairs and programme centre heads of the International Cooperative Programmes (ICP) and the Chair of the Joint Task Force (with WHO) on Health. Together these form the Extended Bureau of the Working Group on Effects.



*From left: Beat Achermann, Anne Christine Le Gall, Heinz Gregor, Tor Johannessen, Wojciech Mill, Fred Conway*

The current membership of the Bureau is:

**Heinz Gregor** (Germany) chairs the Working Group on Effects and its Bureaux. He works at the Federal Environment Agency in Germany and was elected in 2001. He has long experience with the Convention and was the first Chair of the Convention's Task Force on Mapping (now ICP Modelling and Mapping of Air Pollution Effects, Risks and Trends). The Task Force was responsible for developing Europe-wide critical loads maps of acidification and eutrophication that were used for negotiating the Oslo and Gothenburg Protocols.

**Beat Achermann** (Switzerland) has served the Bureau continuously since 1990 and works at the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment. He has facilitated, in particular, the assessment of ozone impacts on vegetation and the further development of empirical critical loads for nitrogen.

**Tor Johannessen** (Norway) has had long experience with the Bureau - in 1990-1991 and again since 1998. He works at the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority.

**Wojciech Mill** (Poland) was elected in 2002. He is working at the Institute of Environmental Protection and has been active in ICP Modelling and Mapping work since 1990.

**Fred Conway** (Canada) joined the Bureau in 2003 and works at Environment Canada. He ensures that the North American dimension is fully covered in the Bureau's deliberations.

**Anne Christine Le Gall** (France) works for the National Institute of the Industrial Environment and Risks (Institut National de l'Environnement Industriel et des Risques, INERIS). She was elected to the Bureau in 2004. She also participates in activities under the Convention, in particular those on POPs.



Contributions to future editions of the newsletter are welcomed.

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