

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Bureau

Second extraordinary meeting (online, 19 April 2024)

Informal notes of the meeting¹

Prepared by the secretariat²

I. Organizational matters

1. The second extraordinary³ meeting of the Bureau under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment took place on 19 April 2024 online. The date of the online meeting of the Bureau was determined after consulting with the members of the Bureau.
2. The aim of the meeting was to consider ongoing organizational issues of the resumed ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention, MoP9) and the resumed fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, MoP5) – i.e., resumed MoP9/MoP5⁴, to be held in Geneva on December 10, 2024⁵.
3. The meeting was chaired by: Mr. George Kremlis (Greece), Chair of the Bureau for the Convention matters, and Ms. Vesna Kolar-Planinšič (Slovenia), Chair of the Bureau for the Protocol matters. The following Bureau members attended the

¹ Available at: <https://unece.org/meetings-7>

² Prepared in consultation with the Bureau. This document wasn't formally edited.

³ The ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (MoP9/MoP5, 12-15 December 2023, Geneva) agreed that due to resource constraints, the 2024 meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) would be cancelled, meaning that the 2024 Bureau meeting to prepare the Working Group would also be cancelled. However, questions regarding the organization of a resumed MoP9/MoP5 have led to the need to schedule and hold extraordinary online meetings of the Bureau. The first extraordinary meeting of the Bureau took place online on 1 March 2024.

⁴ In this document, “resumed Meetings of the Parties” or “resumed MoP9/MoP5” will be used interchangeably throughout the text.

⁵ The decision of the first extraordinary meeting of the Bureau of 01 March 2024.

meeting: Vice-Chairs of the Bureau: Mr. Adam Nagy (European Commission), and Ms. Marthe Lindberg (Norway); Chair of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Ms. Dorota Toryfter-Szumańska (Poland); Vice-Chair of the Working Group: Ms. Anna Maria Maggiore (Italy); Mr. Joe Ducombe (Luxembourg), Chair of the Implementation Committee; and Ms. Susan Vernij (the Netherlands), First Vice-Chair of the Implementation Committee.

II. The agenda of the Bureau meeting

4. The Bureau considered the following items of the agenda:
 - (a) Chairing the Resumed Meetings of the Conference of the Parties (resumed MoP9/MoP5)
 - (b) Scheduling the meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA for 2025
 - (c) Financial Support for participation in the resumed MoP9/MoP5
 - (d) A reminder for Parties' Implementation Reports

III. Chairing the Resumed Meetings of the Conference of the Parties (MoPs)

5. The Bureau recalled that at its first extraordinary meeting of March 1, 2024, the Bureau unanimously agreed that “The Chair of the high-level segment of MoP9/MoP5 will continue chairing the resumed meetings (if the Chair is not available, a new Chair will be elected at the meeting)”.
6. The secretariat reported that it had been informed that the Chair of the high-level segment of MOP9/MOP5, Ms. Iordanca Rodica Iordanov (Republic of Moldova), no longer held her government position.
7. The Bureau considered existing options for chairing the resumed high-level segment of the MOPs.
8. **The Bureau decided** to request the secretariat **to ask the Republic of Moldova** (the current Chair) whether the Party is willing to continue chairing the resumed MoP9/MoP5, and to request it to send a response in writing⁶ at the earliest opportunity for further consideration.

IV. Scheduling the meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA for 2025

9. The Bureau recalled that the MoP9/MoP5 invited the Secretariat to explore options for holding the meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA in 2025 earlier than usual (in summer, or early autumn), considering two-year long gap between the MoP9/MoP5 in December 2023, and the Working Group on EIA and SEA in December 2025.

⁶ Update from the secretariat: After communicating with the Republic of Moldova, the secretariat received the response (attached to this document as an annex) signed by H.E. Sergiu Lazarencu, Minister of Environment. The response informs of the nomination of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova in Geneva for the position of Chair.

10. The secretariat informed the Bureau of the current administrative and logistical difficulties related to the rescheduling of meetings at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

11. The Bureau discussed whether a possible change of dates of the Working Group on EIA and SEA in 2025 could bring some benefits to the process. The Bureau considered that the MOP9/MOP5 proposal aimed at exploring the possibility of rescheduling the Working Group on EIA and SEA in 2025 was put forward before the decision on the organization of the resumption of the MOP was taken; however, under current circumstances, the interval between the planned meetings of the Convention and the Protocol is only one year. Furthermore, logistical and administrative challenges would make it very difficult to find a practical solution to move the Working Group on EIA and SEA in 2025 to May-June; also, holding the working group in late September or October 2025 would not bring any substantial benefit compared to the currently scheduled date in December 2025.

12. Therefore, **the Bureau** concluded that moving the dates of the Working Group on EIA and SEA in 2025 in the current circumstances was not a good option and **decided not to request the secretariat to take action** in this regard.

V. Financial support for participation in the Resumed MoP9/MoP5

13. The Bureau recalled that the budget for the workplan for 2024-2026 (as adopted by MoP9/MoP5 in December 2023 by Decision IX/2-V/2, annex 2) does not provide for an allocation of funds for meetings in 2024, including the resumed MoPs, as the decision regarding the resumed MOPs was made after the adoption of the workplan. This raises potential concerns about the participation of delegates from eligible Parties and stakeholders and - possibly - about the potential decision-making procedure at the resumed MoPs in case some Parties are unable to attend due to financial constraints.

14. The secretariat indicated that approximately \$33,000 would be required to finance the costs for meeting participants to one additional meeting: for delegates from eligible ECE countries (up to \$20,000), NGOs (up to \$10,000), and non-ECE countries (up to \$3,000).

15. The Bureau discussed possible solutions consisting of offering the usual financial support for the resumed MoPs, with the understanding that these funds will be deducted from the support budget of a future meetings (2025 or 2026), and of inviting the Parties to increase their financial contributions to the treaties' trust fund to ensure financial support for travel of eligible participants to all future meetings, including the resumed MoPs in 2024 and two meetings of the Working Group (one in 2025 and one in 2026).

16. **The Bureau decided to:**

- (a) Ask the secretariat to **proceed with offering the usual financial support** to eligible Parties and stakeholders **for the participation in the resumed MoPs**, with the understanding that these funds will be taken from the support budget of future meetings; and
- (b) **Invite the Parties to increase their financial contributions** to the Treaties' trust fund **to ensure financial support for the travel** of eligible meeting participants **to all future meetings**, including the resumed MoPs sessions in 2024 and two meetings of the Working Group (in 2025 and 2026).

VI. A reminder for Parties' Implementation Reports

17. The Bureau recalled that the Decisions IX/5 and V/5, related to review of implementation of the Convention and Protocol for 2019-2021, urged several Parties to submit their reports.
18. **The Bureau decided to circulate a reminder** to those Parties that haven't yet sent their Implementation Reports that the implementation reports are due, and the parties are invited to submit them as soon as possible.

Annex

Official letter of the Minister of Environment of Moldova, H.E. Sergiu Lazarencu, of May 15th, 2024, nominating the representative of Moldova for chairing the resumed MoPs.

**MINISTERUL
MEDIULUI
AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA**



**MINISTRY
OF ENVIRONMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

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02/1-04/1310 din 15.05.2024

**Tea AULAVUO
Secretary to the (Espoo) Convention
and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

tea.aulavuo@un.org

Subject: *Nomination of Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova in Geneva as Chair of MoP Espoo Convention*

Dear Ms. Aulavuo,

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova hereby informs about the nomination of Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova in Geneva as Chair of MoP Espoo Convention, assisted by Dr. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, an Associate Professor at the Moldova State University (e-mail: iordanca@gmail.com).

For any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at cancelaria@mediu.gov.md.

Sincerely,

**Sergiu LAZARENCU
Minister of Environment**