

SESSION 1 - KIEV OUTCOMES

Overview

Environment Ministers and Heads of delegations from 51 countries in the UNECE region and the representatives of the European Commission attended the 5th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Kiev, 21-23 May 2003, with a broad participation of UN Agencies, International Organisations and Institutes, Regional Environmental Centres and NGOs.

There were 13 main issues discussed in the Ministerial Conference:

- State of the Environment;
- Guidelines on Strengthening Compliance with and Enforcement of Implementation of MEAs;
- 3 new Protocols
- Environmental Partnerships in the UNECE Region;
- Carpathian Convention on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development;
- Pan-European biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy;
- Energy initiatives;
- Education for Sustainable Development;
- Joint Ministerial NGO Session;
- Development, priorities and perspectives of the EfE process;
- Ministerial Declaration.

On 19-20 May, the NGO parallel conference took place, followed by the NGO parallel workshops held from 21-24 May, in parallel with the Ministerial Conference. There were also more than 50 side events organised, mainly to promote sustainable development in the region and cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector.

DetailDay 1: 21 May

After the official opening of the Conference, discussions were held on the Kiev Assessment Report, covering for the first time countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Ministers called upon the European Environment Agency to prepare a 4th Assessment Report for the next Ministerial Conference. They reaffirmed their support to the Environmental Performance Review Programme of UNECE and decided that that the programme should continue. Ministers also endorsed the Guidelines for Strengthening Compliance with and Implementation of MEAs in the UNECE region during a session chaired by Defra Secretary of State Margaret Beckett.

3 Protocols to Conventions of the UNECE were adopted and opened for signature:

- Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention); it was signed by 36 countries, including

- all 15 Member States of the EU, 8 of the acceding States and the European Community.
- Protocol on Civil Liability and Damage caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to the UNECE Conventions on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and on the Protection and use of Transboundary Waters and International Lakes; it was signed by 22 countries including 8 EU Member States and 5 Accessing States.
 - Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention); it was signed by 37 countries, including all EU Member States and 8 of the Accession States.

Day 2: 22 May

On the second day of the Conference, Ministers and Heads of Delegations held debates on Environmental Partnerships, and adopted the Environmental Strategy for the Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. As. The EAP Task Force was invited to lead efforts in the facilitation and support of the achievement of the Strategy, in cooperation with relevant international organisations and institutions. An annex to the strategy lists the roles that international organisations and institutions could play in the implementation of the Strategy, and EECCA Ministers agreed to meet to review progress a year after Kiev, by which time it was proposed that an action plan should have been elaborated. Ministers also welcomed the Statement on the EU Water Initiative for the EECCA countries and applauded the efforts of the Central Asian States to develop the Central Asian Initiative on Environment, Water and Security, "Invitation to Partnership".

The Convention on Environment Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians was adopted by all seven countries of the Carpathian region and signed by Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the participating countries held policy debates and endorsed the Statement on Energy Efficiency, the Guidelines on Reforming Energy Pricing and Subsidies, the Resolution on Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.

The second day closed with a Special Session between Ministers and NGOs on "Environmental Policy Integration". Three important issues were jointly addressed: letting the market work for the environment; agriculture as an example of sectoral policy integration; and overcoming institutional weaknesses that prevent integration.

Day 3: 23 May 2003

On the third and final day of the Ministerial Conference, Ministers and Heads of Delegations addressing the future of the EfE process, exchanged views and decided that EfE Ministerial Conferences should be held on a regular and predictable basis every four or five years, preferably in a host country. They invited UNECE, through its Committee on Environmental Policy and in consultation with other principal subsidiary bodies and in cooperation with other relevant organisations and institutions to monitor the outcomes of the Kiev Declaration in its work program.

The Kiev Ministerial Declaration was adopted by consensus and it was the final document to be signed on 23 May.

EU & UK Outcome

After difficult negotiations and the EU's persistent efforts to reflect a clear and ambitious political message in the Ministerial Declaration on the most important controversial issues, a mostly satisfactory outcome was achieved. The final document which was adopted and signed by consensus, without any footnotes, promotes to a great extent, the EU positions on a number of important issues, such as:

- A strong political message on the EU Enlargement process;
- Strong language for the three new Protocols of the UNECE Conventions, by the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of States adopting and signing the Protocols;
- Reference to all targets on water as stated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, on the EU Water Initiative (both the Component for the Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian countries and the Mediterranean Component);
- Environmental Education;
- Satisfactory message on the role of business and industry – corporate social responsibility and accountability and on sustainable production and consumption patterns;
- Call for clear and ambitious time-bound national targets in the energy for sustainable development paragraphs;
- The modalities for preparing the coming Ministerial Conferences, their frequency and the respective role of the EAP Task Force, the Project Preparation Committee and other international organisations.

Despite all efforts by the Presidency and the EU M-S, the Ministerial Declaration does not include reference to the Kyoto Protocol, since the final formulation of the respective paragraph did not meet the expectations of EU. Regarding the reference to actions for progressively reducing and, where possible, removing energy price subsidies which counteract an efficient use of energy and/or have harmful effects on the environment, the EU compromised, to delete reference to the time target of 2005. As no basis for agreement could be attained on the nuclear safety issue, there was no reference to it in the Ministerial Declaration. Therefore, EU with Acceding and Associated countries and other like-minded countries prepared and delivered a separate Statement on Nuclear Safety.

In addition to the formal parts of the conference, the UK was actively involved in a number of side events and other activities. Defra Secretary of State Margaret Beckett launched the new Environment for Europe fund at a press launch, subsequent to a well attended side event where stakeholders expressed views about what the priorities of the fund should be. A stand explaining some aspects of UK support to sustainable development in the UNECE region attracted many visitors throughout the Conference and displayed examples of work supported by Defra and DFID. The FCO held a side event on the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership which was launched at WSSD and the UK also funded a seminar as part of the Stakeholder Forum project to debate the roles and opportunities for NGOs and wider civil society to address the Principle 10 issues of participation, justice and access to information.

Members of the UK delegation participated in a number of side events, including those on Strategic Environmental Assessment, PRTRs and the Central Asian Water Initiative. The UK Ambassador to the Ukraine Robert Brinkley attended a number of the official sessions to the conference and was a guest speaker at 2 side events. Following the end of the Conference, members of the UK delegation visited a DFID sponsored rural development project near Kiev, which gave a better understanding of some of the issues facing rural communities in Ukraine.

A number of press interviews with the Secretary of State and other members of the UK delegation were carried out and 3 press notices were issued to UK and EECCA journalists.

The margins of the Conference gave a useful opportunity for Margaret Beckett to build on the relationships that she has developed with other Environment Ministers of the region and she fitted in 5 formal bilateral meetings with Romania, Norway, Ukraine, Georgia and Ireland