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TASK FORCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION  
PROGRAMME FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

**"REINVENTING" THE EAP TASK FORCE:  
Organisation of work and mandate extension after the Astana Ministerial Meeting**

**12-13 May 2011 (Berlin, Germany)**

*Agenda Item 8.*

*The purpose of this short note is to facilitate discussions during the EAP Task Force's Annual Meeting in Berlin on the organisational aspects of the EAP Task Force's future work after the Astana Environment for Europe Ministerial meeting. It complements the work programme proposal [ENV/EPOC/EAP(2011)4].*

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## **“REINVENTING” THE EAP TASK FORCE: Organisation of work and mandate extension after the Astana Ministerial Meeting**

### **Purpose**

1. Decisions about the possible future role of the EAP Task Force will be addressed by the EAP Task Force, and in the preparatory process for, and during, the Astana Conference. To support these discussions, the current paper considers cooperation between OECD and EECCA RECs, working methods, and how the mandate of the EAP Task Force could be extended at the Astana Conference.

### **Background**

2. The Task Force for the implementation of the Environmental Action Programme (the EAP Task Force) was established at the Lucerne “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference in 1993 in order to assist the “environmental reconstruction” of transition economies based on sound economic, governance, and financing principles. OECD, with its significant experience of policy integration, was considered well placed to provide such assistance.

3. The work of the EAP Task Force has evolved considerably since its establishment in response to new needs and a changing geo-political landscape. The very first cycles of work focused on facilitating environmental policy design. Since the late 1990s, an increasing emphasis has been put on policy implementation in the context of EECCA countries. A range of policy instruments have been addressed, such as indicators and valuation, cleaner production and integrated pollution prevention and control, environmental compliance and enforcement, public environmental expenditure. Work on water supply and sanitation was launched during a joint meeting of environment, finance and economy ministers in Almaty in 2000, and has been steadily growing in importance. Since the 2007 Belgrade Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the Task Force’s work has been organised around two major areas: financing water supply and sanitation, and environmental policy implementation.

4. At the 2009 Annual Meeting of the EAP Task Force, delegations called for the work of the EAP Task Force to be reoriented to take account of changing policy and financing priorities, as well as the contraction of available resources following the global financial crisis. Specifically, countries requested a restructuring of the work programme around two issues: green growth and the economic and financial aspects of integrated water resources management, including adaptation to climate change. Delegates suggested that a restructuring of the work programme along these lines could provide the basis for further work by the EAP Task Force after the 2011 Astana Conference.

### **Cooperation between OECD and EECCA RECs**

5. The Belgrade Ministerial Conference called on OECD and EECCA RECs to jointly implement the EAP Task Force’s work programme. After unsuccessful attempts to simultaneously raise funds for joint projects, the 2009 annual meeting of the EAP Task Force considered that a new approach was needed for organising the work of the Task Force that would enable it to make better use of the comparative advantages of OECD and EECCA RECs. It was agreed that the EAP Task Force should provide a common platform for the work of both OECD and EECCA RECs to support environmental policy reform and capacity development in EECCA countries, based on multi-stakeholder dialogue. On this basis, the EAP Task Force decided that OECD should continue to implement an agreed work programme. When appropriate, some activities could be implemented in cooperation with EECCA RECs. At the same time, the EAP Task Force should provide a platform for EECCA RECs to disseminate the results of their work and to seek support for on-going and future activities. Feedback from the first EAP Task Force meeting under this new approach in October 2010 was very positive. The EAP Task Force Bureau, at its meeting in January 2011, considered that this new arrangement would provide a good basis for future work of the EAP Task Force.

## Organisation of work

6. The EAP Task Force uses a wide spectrum of methods to promote better policies and institutional reforms in EECCA. Most importantly, the Task Force:

- Conducts analysis and facilitates exchange of experience, and develops region-specific guidelines based on synthesis of international best practices;
- Diffuses information on most effective and efficient policies and tools, and helps adapting them to EECCA specifics;
- Implements demonstration projects which can serve as models for environmental policy reform;
- Mobilises support from donors and International Financial Institutions to upgrade institutional and human capacities for environmental management and to remove institutional obstacles to investments in the environmental and water sectors;
- Monitors progress in environmental and water policy reforms;
- Co-operates with the governmental and non-governmental sectors to build public and political support for reform.

7. More recently, national policy dialogues have played a particularly prominent role in the array of methods used by the EAP Task Force. National policy dialogues have been a key component of work on the water sector, and have been developed in close cooperation with the national governments and other international partners, particularly the EU Water Initiative and the UNECE. These dialogues constitute a structured way to engage a variety of stakeholders in the reform of specific policies, laws, regulations on the basis of robust information and analysis.

8. EECCA RECs bring a strong record of outreach activities, multi-stakeholder dialogue facilitation, and public participation to the work of the EAP Task Force. Moreover, the RECs are well placed to cooperate with local authorities, and other partners at the local level. The October 2010 meeting of the EAP Task Force enabled the RECs to present recent activities including the promotion of sectoral integration, Strategic Environmental Assessment, and payments for ecosystem services.

9. The discussion about providing a further mandate for the EAP Task Force presents an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the above-described work methods and programme implementation arrangements more generally. The EAP Task Force members may wish to consider the working methods that the OECD and EECCA RECs could employ to support the work of the EAP Task Force, separately and in cooperation. In so doing, the Task Force may wish to take account of evolving environmental priorities and geo-political changes, a stronger domestic private sector, and maturing governance structures in some EECCA countries. Working methods should also take account of unstable and often unpredictable financing.

## Extending the mandate of the EAP Task Force

10. In previous Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences, the extension of the EAP Task Force's mandate was part of the Ministerial Declaration. At its last meeting in January 2011, the EAP Task Force Bureau:

- Agreed that if a decision is taken at the political level to extend the mandate of the EAP Task Force, this decision would need to be recorded in the outcomes of the Astana meeting;
- Considered that an extension of the EAP Task Force's mandate could be included in the Ministerial Declaration as has been done on previous occasions, and that the role of the EAP Task Force could also be mentioned in sections on future work in the two official documents for the Conference; in this context, reference could also be made to strengthening the relationship between OECD and EECCA RECs.

11. The EAP Task Force is invited to discuss this approach and, if the Bureau's recommendation is approved, instruct national delegates to the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and the Astana Ministerial Conference to promote this decision of the EAP Task Force.