



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 15 June 2009**

**10932/09**

**ENV 427  
ONU 44  
COEST 222**

**NOTE**

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from : General Secretariat  
to : Delegations

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Subject : Environment for Europe - Reform achievements in implementation of the outcomes of the Belgrade Conference  
– Information from the Presidency

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Delegations will find annexed a note from the Presidency on the above subject, which will be dealt with under "other business" at the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 25 June 2009.

**Environment for Europe - Reform achievements in implementation of the outcomes of the Belgrade Conference  
- Information from the Presidency -**

Ministers at the 6<sup>th</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Belgrade in October 2007 decided to undertake a reform of the EfE process in order to ensure that the process remains relevant and valuable and to strengthen its effectiveness.

The UN ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) was given a mandate to develop, in consultation with EfE partners, a reform plan that was endorsed by the UN ECE at its 63<sup>rd</sup> session on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

The Presidency welcomes the outcomes of the EfE reform, which highlighted the need to focus on results-based and action-oriented activities when solving environmental issues. The EfE process should continue as a political framework for broad environmental cooperation within the UN ECE that will pursue the improvement of environmental conditions and governance, streamlining the implementation of existing UN ECE legally and non-legally binding instruments, enhance efforts in environmental monitoring, ensure implementation of the Environmental Performance Review Programme and raise public awareness on environmental issues. At the same time, the process should provide common ground for highly relevant debates on how to strengthen the links among environmental policies, competitiveness and social and economic prosperity in the UN ECE region.

Greater emphasis has been put on a streamlined preparatory process for the EfE Conferences to avoid any duplication and enhance its effectiveness. More interactive Conferences dealing with no more than two themes could ensure more focused results and broader involvement of all stakeholders, in particular the private sector. Overall effectiveness of the process will be ensured by continuous monitoring of progress of the implementation of the outcomes of the Conferences.

The 7<sup>th</sup> UN ECE Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” that will be held in 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan, will be organized on the basis of the agreed reform. Therefore, a more in-depth discussion on priority themes should start as soon as possible, taking into account the preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on the environment. This would include the Pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports.