



Network of Heads of Environment Protection Agencies – 10th meeting, Oslo, 24 - 25 April 2008

The Network of Heads of Environment Protection Agencies held its 10th plenary meeting in Oslo, Norway, on 24 - 25 April 2008. There were 53 representatives from 24 agencies from 18 countries, as well as from the European Commission and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The meeting was hosted jointly by the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority and the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, who gave the plenary an overview of both the work of the two organisations and the state of the environment in Norway. Thereafter EEA gave a comprehensive overview of recent EU environmental policy highlights and related developments, followed by information on the visits to EEA member countries in the context of work towards developing the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) for Europe.

Climate change and carbon capture and storage (CCS) were discussed following a presentation from Norway on their ongoing CCS projects. The discussion focused on issues such as ongoing full scale projects, safe storage, liability and uncertainty, ongoing research programmes and the need for robust regulatory mechanisms to ensure effective implementation. Interested members will prepare a paper as input to the Commission's proposal for a directive on geological storage of carbon. It was further mentioned that such a directive would influence a number of existing directives such as IPPC and LCP.

The Swiss EPA informed the participants about work being done in the newly established Network for Nature Conservation Agencies (ENCA Network) and it was agreed to work closely together on issues that are of interest to both networks. Examples of ongoing activities where close cooperation is beneficial are climate change and adaptation, biodiversity and management of natural systems as well as GMOs.

The Interest Group on Biodiversity, led by EA England and Wales, informed the meeting about the outcome of the survey of roles of agencies in implementing the action plan "*Halting the loss of the Biodiversity before 2010 and beyond*". The survey gave a strong indication of the important role of both the Environmental Protection Agencies and Nature Conservation Agencies in implementing the action plan as well as their role in enforcing obligations in the area of biodiversity, and management of natural systems in general.





The Interest Group on Natural Resources, led by UBA Germany, will in the short term focus on resource efficiency and resource management issues of sustainable consumption and production. The Interest Group will hold its next meeting 4 June 2008 in Brussels.

The Scottish EPA gave feedback from the awareness raising workshop on Environment and Health which took place the previous day. The outcome of the workshop emphasised the importance of good and well targeted communication, awareness raising and in particular risk communication. The EEA suggested looking at linkages between EPAs and health bodies at national level and interested EPAs will analyse the outcome of the workshop and explore further areas of work.

The Interest Group on Contaminated sites and soil protection, led by APAT from Italy, has been exchanging information on good practices (questionnaire, case-studies) and the consequences of the Soil Framework Directive (SFD) in Member States. Following the 3rd meeting of the Interest Group, the planned activities will focus on the following threats covered by the SFD: contamination, compaction of soil in arable land and soil biodiversity loss. In addition, soil carbon loss influence due to climate change will be taken into account, as proposed by UBA Germany. The Interest Group will also investigate the consequences of the implementation of the POPs Directive in Member States with regard to soil contamination, as suggested by the Environment Agency England and Wales.

The Interest Group on Better regulation, led by EA England and Wales, presented a vision paper on improving the effectiveness of environmental regulation. The paper was endorsed by the plenary and will be published, as well as communicated to DG Environment, as input to the Better Regulation Action Plan. Future areas of work will include the Services Directive, the Future Vision paper, capacity and resources, training and SMEs.

The Position Paper developed by the Interest Group on Climate change and adaptation, on the EU Green Paper “*Adapting to Climate change in Europe Options for EU Action*” has received a positive response from the Commission. Furthermore, the interest group, which is led by MNP Netherlands, has been collecting and exchanging information on activities and experiences on adaptation to climate change in Member States and has developed a database with the aim of comparing adaptation activities and measures. Finally, it was agreed to send an input paper on reporting to the Commission’s stakeholder meeting on the White Paper in May.





The Slovenian EPA is leading an Interest Group on Quality Management which has been looking at “benchlearning” and identifying future activities. The Interest Group will prepare a survey, as proposed by APAT, on monitoring and accredited laboratories and how they work. In addition, the Interest Group will also identify management indicators.

Since the last plenary meeting in September 2007, a group of EPAs has prepared an initial survey mapping their activities in the area of International Cooperation. The plenary agreed to establish an Interest Group, led by SFT Norway, to continue the initial work, including information on EU funding processes, and it was suggested to use the tools available on the EPA Network’s website for collecting the information. It was agreed to share information about activities in order to create synergies.

The Flemish EPA gave a presentation on EURIDICE (European Regional Indicators). During the discussion, SEIS, INSPIRE and GMES were mentioned as essential instruments. The Network agreed to keep the topic of European regional indicators on the agenda, while EEA and the EC undertook to keep the Network updated on possible developments.

The Swiss EPA offered to host a meeting concerning GMOs and alien species in July 2008 and it was agreed to invite the IG Biodiversity, the representatives from the ENCA Network and the Joint Research Centre of the EU.

The EEA informed the plenary about the recent study of effectiveness evaluation of Large Combustion Plants and BREFS and invited EPAs to share information from their respective countries and explore a possible role of influencing the revision of the IPPC Directive.

The next plenary meeting will take place in Ghent 15-16 September 2008.

