

## Improving skills of NGOs of EECCA-states to participate in procedures according to the UNECE SEA Protocol

We have started this project earlier in 2021 with the aim to strengthen capacity of environmental civil society organisations in EECCA region to use SEA tools in greening infrastructure related plans and programmes.

Within the project we have organised training for EECCA region NGOs on how SEA can be applied to infrastructure plans/programmes related to transport sector. That resulted in selection of 5 NGOs who are performing a moot SEA process (reports) using real infrastructure plans or programmes as a testing material. In the future these 5 organisations will serve as excellence centers and will be able to help others to use SEA for future plans and programmes.

The project is funded by the German Federal Environmental Ministry's Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union. It is supervised by the German Environment Agency (UBA).

The responsibility for the content of this Newsflash lies with the authors.



## December 2021

- 10<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting of the Espoo Convention and SEA Protocol
- Seminar on Sustainable Infrastructure

## Espoo Convention Working Group 10<sup>th</sup> meeting: major takeaways

On 01 – 03 December, 2021, the Espoo Convention and SEA Protocol Working Group gathered in Geneva for its [10<sup>th</sup> meeting](#). Due to COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was held in a hybrid format. **Andriy Andrushevych**, representing the European ECO Forum, reports back to our members about the major outcomes and highlights.

### *Amendments still lack ratifications*

To date, the Convention counts 45 Parties, including 44 States (out of the 56 ECE Member States) and the European Union. The number of Parties to the Convention has remained unchanged since 2010.

The 1<sup>st</sup> amendment (2001) was adopted to open to the Convention to the states outside the ECE region. It entered into force 26 August 2014, but the Convention still lacks 5 ratifications to make this amendment operational. The remaining 5 parties are Armenia, Ukraine, Belgium, North Macedonia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment (2004) was adopted with a view to further strengthening its application and improving synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements. In particular, it aligned its Annex I (list of activities subject to EIA) with the respective EU directive. It entered into force on 23 October 2017 but is not yet ratified by 10 parties to the Convention (so it is not applicable to them).

### *EU reporting*

Until today the EU was not reporting on implementation of the Espoo Convention and its SEA protocol because “being a regional economic integration organization, it felt it inappropriate to return a completed questionnaire”.

However, the latest Meeting of the Parties requested the Implementation Committee to develop a reporting format for them. In consultation with the EU, the Implementation Committee developed draft reporting formats EU (for both the [Convention](#) and [SEA Protocol](#)) and presented to the Working Group.





You can find all meeting documents through the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3EsEfRm>



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### ***Compliance and implementation***

The Implementation Committee reported on its work since the last Meeting of the Parties. In particular, 7 out of 15 information gathering procedures on the Committee's agenda are related to the compliance issues related to the lifetime extensions of nuclear power plants.

The Committee observed that, the nuclear related cases, including lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, involve a multitude of concerned Parties. Due to that fact, a majority of the Committee members would find that they had a direct or indirect conflict of interest with respect to several of the issues in question. Consequently, with respect to situations of conflict of interest, the Committee decided to exceptionally and provisionally abstain from applying rule 5 of its operating rules, unless the Committee members in question chose, nevertheless, not to take part in the Committee's related deliberations.

### ***Seminar on sustainable infrastructure***

During the WGP meeting, a seminar on sustainable infrastructure was organized under the lead of Switzerland.

The general objective of the seminar is to share knowledge and experience regarding the legislation and practice for implementation of the Convention and the Protocol to energy, transport and other infrastructure plans, programmes and projects.

One of the specific issues of interest during the seminar was the role of strategic environmental assessment and transboundary environmental impact assessment for greening infrastructure plans and projects foreseen under the "Belt and Road" initiative in the ECE region, but also in other continents including the Arctic, Africa and Latin America.

Presentations are available at the meeting's [web site](#) under "Presentations and Statements" section.

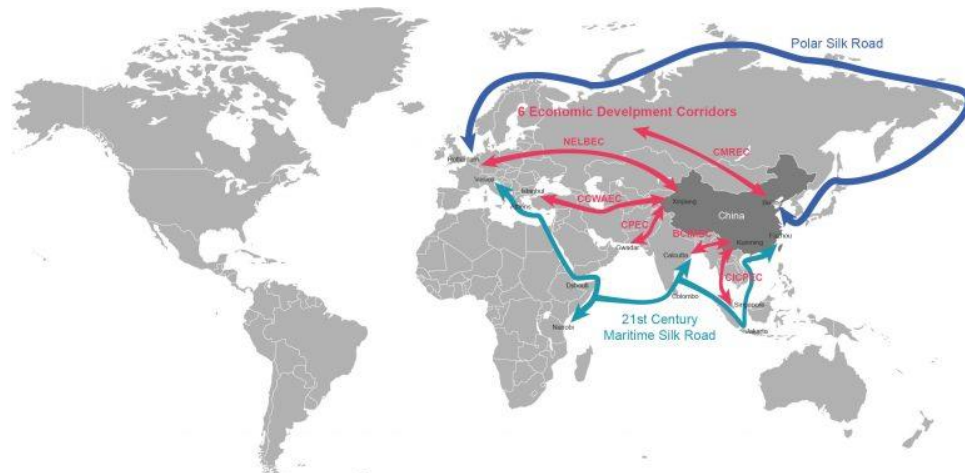


Photo from: <https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/belt-and-road/>



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