



**Chair's Summary of the Informal European Regional Ministerial Consultation
for 2017 Environment Assembly
"Europe's call for a Pollution Free Planet"
13 June 2017, Ostrava, Czech Republic**

The informal European Regional Ministerial Consultation for 2017 Environment Assembly brought together 52 participants from 25 countries, including representatives from the Ministry of Health, WHO Europe, UN Economic Commission for Europe, the European Union, UN Habitat and civil society. The consultation was held at the margins of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The main purpose of the consultation was to brief and update Environment Ministers and high-level representatives on the state of preparations for, and expected outcomes of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly, including the outcome of joint meeting of the bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives that was held from 9 -10 June 2017, in Puntarenas, Costa Rica

Summary of main conclusions:

1. The participants welcomed the organization of the first ever Pan-European consultation and its relevance in addressing regional cross-cutting policy issues and in providing regional perspectives to global issues. The Europe region can make a significant contribution to the overall outcome of 2017 Environment Assembly and to scaling up the impact of the Assembly on the international community. Participants noted the symbolic and practical nature of the consultation held in Ostrava, a major industrial region known for its environmental legacy. Equally, it links to both the theme of the 2017 Environment Assembly and the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health.
2. The Europe region has been in the lead to bringing about solutions to environmental challenges, and European Member States must continue their engagement to take actions to move towards a pollution-free planet.
3. Pollution is not only affecting people and the ecosystem, but also fundamentally threatening our own existence. The causes and consequences of pollution should compel us to ensure the right policies, incentives and actions are put in place to tackling and moving 'Towards a Pollution-Free Planet' at the individual, community, national, regional and global levels. The 2017 Environment Assembly offers the opportunity to showcase solutions and advances made to protecting citizens from the harmful impact of pollution, and governments and stakeholders should join the Assembly in greater numbers to share success stories.
4. Member States were informed and encouraged to make use of the CPR portal that provides easy access to the relevant information and documents, as well as the possibility for Member States and accredited non-governmental organizations who are unable to physically attend the meetings to join via an audio or video connection, and to actively contribute to the different deliberations.
5. The participants appreciated the different efforts, opportunities and platforms provided by UN Environment's Europe Office to better inform and engage European Member States, who do not have representation in Nairobi, on the deliberations of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), its subsidiary

bodies and on UN Environment programmes and related activities, through Geneva-based Permanent Missions. In particular, the establishment of the platform of friends of Environment Assembly in Geneva was welcomed.

6. The background document for Environment Assembly should enable Ministers to critically look at opportunities for achieving a Pollution-Free Planet, be it through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and other regulatory or practical mechanisms at national, regional and global levels. It should offer practical solutions and examples that can inform actionable commitments by Member States.
7. Participants acknowledged the role of partnership and integrated response involving all actors and sector as key towards achieving the common goal of a pollution-free planet, supportive of health and well-being for all, and that of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
8. The joint initiatives and work undertaken with regional partners have led to transformative actions (to address specific areas of environmental concern, such as water and air pollution, environmental rights, environmental assessment and industrial accidents) not only to support efforts in Europe, but also to serve as valuable examples for other regions. Such synergy is underscored by holding the Regional Consultation back to back with the Ostrava conference. The active the participation and engagement of civil society is key to achieve the vision 'Towards a Pollution Free Planet'.
9. The participant supported the proposed outline of the Ministerial Declaration tabled by the President as a good basis for a concise and influential Ministerial Declaration. The Ministerial Declaration must be action oriented and meaningful to everyone around the world.
10. UN Environment's key strength being keeping the environment under review and our policies should be based on science. However, citizens and constituencies back home expect Ministers at 2017 Environment Assembly not only to review, but also to act on key findings to address pollution. Action speaks louder than words. The Ministerial Outcome Document therefore should demonstrate how our political commitment resolves to tackle pollution where it matters most. The outcome should highlight this and demonstrate that we will act accordingly. Meaningful action will not be a matter of agreeing new ambitions or of new legal frameworks. It is all there: crucial ambitions - and the principles guiding their fulfillment in particular with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.
11. Participants recalled the 2016 Assembly, where Member States had adopted a great number of resolutions giving effect to UN Environment's work program and medium-term strategy. This year's Assembly should aim for limited number of resolutions that focus on areas where UN Environment has a key role in fostering partnerships and action towards a pollution-free world. It is also worth to consider joint submission by several member states and groups than stand-alone proposals. Resolutions should be complementary to the ministerial declaration and should see pollution in an integrated manner.
12. Participants recognized the need to raise the profile of the Environment Assembly as the world's highest-level decision-making body on global environment, and the need to strengthen the link with the high level political forum and to adopt a long-term approach to achieve ambitious results. To stimulate high level of representation from the region at the Environment Assembly – including with the view of the upcoming presidency of the Environment Assembly by the Eastern Europe Regional Group – UN Environment may consider opening of a dedicated regional fund to enable eligible countries' engagement.
13. The participants appreciated the usefulness of this first ever consultation for the region which represents a good food-for-thought on how to ensure the continuation of a regional consultative process in the future, including at the ministerial level, to feed into future sessions of the Environment Assembly.