

Updated Handbook for the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its Protocols



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**UPDATED HANDBOOK FOR THE 1979
CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE
TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION
AND ITS PROTOCOLS**



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Foreword

I clearly remember when I was a child in Denmark the debate on how acidification would destroy both our lakes and our forests. It worried me a lot. The response to this debate was the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. Adopted 35 years ago, it is the oldest of the UNECE environmental conventions as well as the first international legally binding instrument to address problems of air pollution on a broad regional basis. Since 1979 the Convention has been ratified by 51 Parties and has thus provided a framework for scientific collaboration and policy negotiation across the UNECE region. Through the implementation of eight protocols, which set national emission targets and identify specific measures for cutting emissions across a wide range of sectors, some of the region's major environmental problems have been successfully addressed. This includes the die-back of forests and the fish loss in lakes. Children in our region no longer have to worry as I did. Emissions of sulphur dioxide have been reduced by 70 per cent, emissions of non-methane volatile organic compounds have been cut by 50 per cent and nitrogen oxide emissions stand at 40 per cent less than their 1990 levels.

Despite the success of the Convention to this date, a lot remains to be done, as evidenced by the regular peaks of pollution registered in cities like Los Angeles, Paris or Bucharest. The impacts of air pollution on our health and the environment continue to be worrisome. In 2012, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 7 million people, 600,000 of those alone in the European region, died in the world as a result of air pollution exposure. Responding to the newest findings on the effects of air pollution, the Convention has widened its scope since its entry into force in 1983. Initially focused on problems of acidification and eutrophication, it now addresses a wider array of pollutants including ground-level ozone, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and, most recently, particulate matter.

This Handbook constitutes an updated version of the previous Handbook of the Convention and contains the most recent versions of the Convention's eight protocols as these have been amended and/or adjusted in order to maintain their relevance to the work of the Convention and/or to accommodate new Parties. The amended Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, for example, once entered into force, will be the first binding agreement to address emission reduction commitments for fine particulate matter. It also introduces flexibility to facilitate the accession of new Parties, mainly countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The increased ratification and implementation across the entire region is crucial in addressing transboundary air pollution effectively and remains a priority for the UNECE in the coming years.

We must strengthen our joint efforts, not only across national boundaries, but also across sectors to tackle air pollution in the pan-European region to improve our health and our environment.



Christian Friis Bach
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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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*	The amendments concern the annex and were adopted by the Executive Body at its thirty-third session held from 8 to 11 December 2014 (ECE/EB.AIR/127, para 71 (a)). The annex to this protocol is subject to continuous review. The most up-to-date version is available online at: http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/emep_h1.html
**	The amendments concern the technical annex and were adopted by the Executive Body at its fourteenth session held on 25-28 November 1996 (ECE/EB.AIR/49, paras. 13-14).
***	The amendment concerns annex III and was adopted by the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution at its fourteenth session held on 25-28 November 1996 (ECE/EB.AIR/49, para. 17).
****	The amendments concern Annex II and were adopted at sessions of the Executive Body as indicated in the footnotes to the annex.
*****	The protocol was amended in 2012 through the adoption of decisions 2012/5 and 2012/6 by the Executive Body at its thirty-first session.
*****	The protocol was amended in 2009 through the adoption of decisions 2009/1, 2009/2 and 2009/3 by the Executive Body at its twenty-seventh session.
*****	The protocol was amended in 2012 through the adoption of decisions 2012/1 and 2012/2 by the Executive Body at its thirtieth session.

List of Abbreviations

Currencies

DM	Deutsche mark
ECU	European currency unit
US\$	United States dollar

Organizations, centres and programmes

CEN	Comité européen de normalisation
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
EMEP	Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe
EU	European Union
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MSC-W	Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-West
SAPRC	Statewide Air Pollution Research Center, Los Angeles, United States of America
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

Weights and measures

°C	degree Celsius
C	coulomb
cc	cubic centimetres
cm ³	cubic centimetres
dB	decibel
g	gram
GJ	gigajoule
h	hour
K	kelvin
kg	kilogram
km	kilometre
km ²	square kilometre
...	...

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