

NEWS LETTER

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Transboundary EIA Agreement Signed Among Seven Southeast Europe Countries

Environment ministers and high-level representatives from Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia adopted and signed an Agreement that will provide for further implementation of the Espoo Convention. The Agreement was signed during the fourth meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, Finland 1991), which took place 19-21 May 2008 in Bucharest.

The "Bucharest Agreement" includes detailed provisions for consultations between the countries concerning all major projects under consideration that might have an adverse transboundary environmental impact. The Agreement details means for providing information to authorities and the public, as well as opportunities to comment for both the countries and the public affected.

Bosnia and Herzegovina may join the Agreement later. Of the seven signatory countries, Serbia is the most recent Party to the Espoo Convention, having acceded on 18 December 2007. Montenegro expects to become a Party to the Convention by the end of 2008. • Nick Bonvoisin • United Nations Economic Commission for Europe • nicholas.bonvoisin@unece.org

European Union Evaluation Report on the EIA Directive Published

The EU's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry has published a report that evaluates EIA Directive 85/337 (as amended) across six member states (UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Spain). It finds that stakeholders generally recognize the value of EIA in preventing harmful impacts, understand impact significance, and are more aware of the need for sustainable development. EIA costs ranged from 1% of the project total for smaller projects down to 0.1% for larger projects, and can take 20-25% of project planning time, but information requirements are generally the same irrespective of EIA.

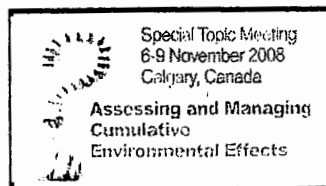
Based on principal problems identified by industry stakeholders, the report emphasizes the importance of improved training/resources for competent authorities, consultees and consultants, improvements in screening, and scoping procedures with firm timetables. Other recommendations include incorporating requirements of other laws, better pre-application screening of projects and IA needs, quality control of procedures, increased size thresholds, and simplified procedures for small projects.

Recommendations to the EU on ways of improving EIA range from a "hard" regulatory response such as a new Regulation or amended EIA Directive and guidance, to "softer" advice that may be taken up nationally by member states. Several IAIA members consulted on the study, advising on the benefits of EIA and relevant practices and procedures. The report can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/dgs/eval.htm>. • Adam Boyden • Nicholas Pearson Associates • adam.boyden@npaconsult.co.uk

Bystroe Canal Project to Be Reconsidered

During the Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) in Bucharest 19-21 May 2008, the Ukraine delegation committed to reconsider its decision to fully implement the so-called Bystroe Canal Project (the Danube-Black Sea Deep-water Navigation Canal in the Ukrainian sector of the Danube Delta). Ukraine also stated that it would not undertake the second phase until its obligations under the Convention were fulfilled.

> continued on page 8



In this issue

1.....Professional News

2-7.....IAIA08 Yearbook

6.....IAIA09 Call for Training Courses

7.....2007-2008 Award Winners Announced

8.....IA in Africa

9-11....IAIA Matters: Listserv, Section Info, News Briefs



Impact Assessment for Creating a Sustainable World

• Sachihiko Harashina • Tokyo Institute of Technology • Sahara@depe.titech.ac.jp

To create a sustainable world is the common goal of human beings, and since impact assessment should be a major tool for securing this goal, the mission of IAIA is very important. With IAIA's vision to be "the leading global network on best practice in the use of impact assessment for informed decision making," I believe that our colleagues also have a common vision to make IAIA the international forum for securing this goal.

I am the first president from Japan in the almost thirty-year history of our society. We have only occasionally had a president whose primary language is not English, and we have had only one other president from the eastern part of the world. As EIA systems have been developed mostly in English-speaking countries, it is quite natural that IAIA was led mostly by people from western countries. But now that we have become a big organization, with members from more than 120 countries, we have to make IAIA more global for creating a sustainable world.

I would like to remove barriers that prevent IAIA from being truly global. The major barriers are language and the differences in economic situations. To surmount the former, we should be more careful in using English as an international language and to make innovations for clear communication while operating IAIA meetings. To resolve the latter, developing countries should support those needing assistance to attend various meetings. We also need to extend the use of Internet services to provide and exchange information at a cheaper cost.

Lastly, I would like to stress ethics. We passed the Code of Conduct, to be signed voluntarily by self-ascribed professional members of IAIA, at the Annual General Meeting held in Perth on 8 May 2008. I think it is quite important to make our society trusted by the world. As IA experts and members of IAIA, we provide relevant information for decision-making on major human action such as policies, plans, programs and projects that might have big impacts on the environment and society; therefore, we should behave honestly and neutrally to be trusted. As the theme of IAIA08 was "The Art and Science of Impact Assessment," we should provide not only scientific information but also opinions of the people to fairly support the wise judgments of decision-makers.

And this is a way for securing human well-being for the future generation. Thus the theme of IAIA09 at Accra, Ghana, is "Impact Assessment and Human Well-Being." Let us meet in Accra next year.



IAIA08
PERTH AUSTRALIA



Participants in the Aboriginal Culture Experience technical visit. Courtesy Jing Du. Photo by Ryo Tajima.

People from different nations and countries dance the "djitti djitti" together with face painting; can you imagine that? Thanks to IAIA08 for giving us such an opportunity to experience aboriginal culture together.

It is believed that you can benefit from all parts of IAIA conference. So next time, join us! • Jing Du • Tokyo University of Technology • Japan



Pause in networking for a photo (left to right: Luis De la Hoz, Rodrigo Sobrino, Paola Cazzola). Courtesy Luis Sobrino. Photo by Manuel Diaz.



Serious business: The Netherlands (Gobbi Schijf and Rob Verbeek) takes on Kenya (Faith W. rugeri and Nick Okello) in the inaugural IAIA World Cup Table Football Championship. Courtesy Nick Okello.