

UNECE

Belarus

Environmental Performance Reviews

Third Review



UNITED NATIONS

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

BELARUS

Third Review



UNITED NATIONS

New York and Geneva, 2016

Environmental Performance Reviews Series No. 44

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The United Nations issued the second Environmental Performance Review of Belarus (Environmental Performance Reviews Series No. 22) in 2005.

This volume is issued in English and in Russian.

ECE/CEP/178

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

<i>Sales 16.II.E.5</i>

ISBN 978-92-1-117103-7 e-ISBN 978-92-1-057737-3
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ISSN 1020-4563

Foreword

It is essential to monitor progress towards environmental sustainability and to evaluate how countries reconcile environmental and economic targets and meet their international environmental commitments. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, countries may more effectively stay ahead of emerging environmental issues, improve their environmental performance and be accountable to their citizens. The ECE Environmental Performance Review Programme provides valuable assistance to member States by regularly assessing their environmental performance so that they can take steps to improve their environmental management, integrate environmental considerations into economic sectors, increase the availability of information to the public and promote information exchange with other countries on policies and experiences.

As we celebrate 20 years of ECE Environmental Performance Reviews, we are undertaking a process of reflection and evaluation of the review process itself. One thing is clear: it has been a valuable mechanism in evaluating the implementation of the extensive environmental legislation enacted and the numerous environment-related conventions ratified by ECE member States. All the countries of the region have further benefited from the discussions on the recommendations of the Environmental Performance Reviews, which entail the sharing of environmental data and knowledge and a frank exchange on best practices and lessons learned.

Recently, new instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, have been negotiated and adopted to address sustainable development challenges. ECE peer review mechanisms, including the Environmental Performance Reviews, play an important role in assessing how well countries are addressing such challenges and meeting their commitments, both old and new. These mechanisms will also continue to provide an opportunity to evaluate whether policies are achieving results, whether there might be better ways to do so, and how to address any shortcomings.

The third Environmental Performance Review of Belarus gathers together a wealth of information to build up a snapshot of the country's environmental governance and performance — both in terms of achievements and shortcomings. I trust that this third review will serve as a powerful tool to support policymakers and representatives of civil society in their efforts to improve environmental management and further promote sustainable development in Belarus. ECE wishes the Government of Belarus further success in carrying out the tasks involved in meeting its environmental objectives, including the implementation of the recommendations in the third review. I also hope that the lessons learned from the peer review process in Belarus will benefit other countries throughout the ECE region and facilitate the achievement and monitoring of the SDGs.



Christian Friis Bach

Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for Europe

Preface

This third Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Belarus takes stock of progress made by Belarus in the management of its environment since it was peer reviewed for the second time in 2005 and assesses the implementation of the recommendations made in the second review. It covers issues of specific importance to the country related to legal and policy frameworks, the financing of environmental expenditures, greening the economy, air protection, water and waste management and biodiversity conservation. It also examines the efforts of Belarus to integrate environmental considerations in its policies in the energy, transport, forestry, tourism, human settlements and health sectors, and highlights the progress achieved in developing environmental education and education for sustainable development. The review further provides a substantive and policy analysis of the country's climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and its participation in international mechanisms.

The successes of Belarus in the achievement of most of the Millennium Development Goals are highlighted, as well as some remaining challenges. Governments are now discussing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the follow-up and review of progress in the achievement of its Sustainable Development Goals. This third review, together with its recommendations, should assist all stakeholders in developing an aspirational national agenda for achieving these Goals.

The third EPR of Belarus began in January 2015 with a preparatory mission to agree on the structure of the report and the schedule for its completion. A team of international experts took part in the review mission from 17 to 25 March 2015. The draft report was submitted to Belarus for comment and to the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews for consideration in September 2015. During its meeting on 12 and 13 October 2015, the Expert Group discussed the draft report with expert representatives of the Government of Belarus, focusing on the conclusions and recommendations made by the international experts. The recommendations, with suggested amendments from the Expert Group, were then submitted for peer review to the Committee on Environmental Policy at its twenty-first session on 29 October 2015. A high-level delegation from Belarus participated in the peer review and the Committee adopted the recommendations in this report.

The Committee and the ECE secretariat are grateful to the Government of Belarus and its experts who worked with the international experts and contributed their knowledge and assistance. ECE would also like to express its appreciation to the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the German Federal Environment Agency for their support by providing funds through the Advisory Assistance Programme, and to Norway and Switzerland for their financial contribution. Sincere thanks also go to France and the United Nations Environment Programme for having provided their experts, and to the United Nations Development Programme for their support of this review.

ECE also takes the opportunity to thank Austria and the Netherlands for their general financial support to the EPR Programme and expresses its deep appreciation to Georgia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Switzerland for having provided their experts for the ECE Expert Group on Environmental Performance Reviews, which undertook the expert review of this report.



Team for the third EPR of Belarus, 2015

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