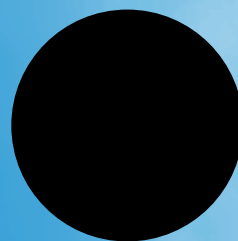


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FOREWORD

The principal aim of the OECD's Environmental Performance Reviews programme is to help *member countries improve their individual and collective performances in environmental management* with the following primary goals:

- to help *individual governments* assess progress;
- to promote a continuous policy *dialogue among member countries*, through a peer review process; and
- to stimulate *greater accountability* from member countries' governments towards their public opinion, within developed countries and beyond.

Environmental performance is assessed with regard to the degree of achievement of *domestic objectives and international commitments*. Such objectives and commitments may be broad aims, specific qualitative goals, precise quantitative targets or a commitment to a set of measures to be taken. Assessment of environmental performance is also placed within the context of historical environmental records, the present state of the environment, the physical endowment of the country in natural resources, its economic conditions and demographic trends.

These systematic and independent reviews have been conducted for all member countries as part of the first cycle of reviews. The OECD is now engaged in the second cycle of reviews directed at *promoting sustainable development*, with emphasis on implementation of domestic and international environmental policy, as well as on the integration of economic, social and environmental decision-making.

The present report reviews environmental performance of Belgium. The OECD extends its most sincere thanks to all those who helped in the course of this review, to the representatives of member countries to the Working Party on Environmental Performance, and especially to the examining countries (Germany, Iceland and Mexico) and their experts. The OECD is particularly indebted to the Government of Belgium and for its co-operation in expediting the provision of information and the organisation of the experts' mission to Belgium, and in facilitating contacts with many individuals both inside and outside administrative and governmental structures. The present review benefited from grant support from Switzerland and Norway.

The OECD Working Party on Environmental Performance conducted the review of Belgium at its meeting on 25 September 2006 and approved its conclusions and recommendations.

Lorents G. Lorentsen
Director, Environment Directorate

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