



# Declaration on Anticipatory Environmental Policies

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## Background Information

The Declaration on Anticipatory Environmental Policies was adopted on 18 May 1979 by the Governments of OECD Member Countries and Yugoslavia. It follows from the 1974 Declaration on Environmental Policy, in which Ministers declared that the protection and progressive improvement of the quality of the environment is a major objective of OECD Member countries.

**THE GOVERNMENTS OF OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES<sup>(\*)</sup> AND OF YUGOSLAVIA:**

- a) **RECALLING** their Declaration on Environmental Policy adopted in 1974;
- b) **NOTING** the significant achievements over the past decade in reducing pollution, conserving natural resources and providing a better human environment;
- c) **RECOGNISING** the need to integrate environmental, economic and social policies;
- d) **CONVINCED** that improving the human environment involves sustained long-term effort requiring policies that take into account at an early stage the environmental consequences of major decisions;
- e) **MINDFUL** of the hazards to health and the environment arising from certain socio-economic activities;
- f) **AWARE** that market mechanisms by themselves often do not induce decisions that reflect their environmental consequences and costs;
- g) **DETERMINED** to pursue vigorous environmental policies in a manner consistent with their constitutional, legal and market economy systems;

**DECLARE** that:

1. They will strive to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated at an early stage of any decision in all economic and social sectors likely to have significant environmental consequences.
2. They will seek more effective institutional, economic and other means to integrate environmental policy with policies in other sectors and in so doing, will attach priority to land-use planning and to the chemicals, energy and other sectors having a major impact on the environment.
3. They will, where appropriate and possible, employ economic and fiscal instruments, in combination as need be with regulatory instruments, to induce public and private enterprises and individuals to anticipate the environmental consequences of their actions and take them into account in their decisions.
4. They will encourage the design, development and use of processes, products and urban form that conserve resources and energy, and that protect and enhance the environment.
5. They will, in proposing laws and making regulations, seek to avoid unduly complex or conflicting requirements and unnecessary delays in decisions affecting the environment.
6. They will endeavour, to the extent practicable, to develop systems to account for changes in environmental quality and related resource stocks.
7. They will encourage public participation, where possible, in the preparation of decisions with significant environmental consequences, *inter alia*, by providing as appropriate information on the risks, costs and benefits associated with the decisions.
8. They will support the promotion of environmental objectives and awareness in the field of education.
9. They will strengthen their co-operation in the OECD in order to encourage arrangements between interested parties on international environmental problems, and to seek harmonization of national environmental policies.
10. They will continue to co-operate to the greatest extent possible, both bilaterally and through appropriate international organisations, with all countries, in particular developing countries in order to assist in preventing environmental deterioration.

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<sup>(\*)</sup> The mention of « Governments » is deemed to apply also to the European Communities

## About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

The OECD Member countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States. The European Union takes part in the work of the OECD.

## OECD Legal Instruments

Since the creation of the OECD in 1961, around 460 substantive legal instruments have been developed within its framework. These include OECD Acts (i.e. the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the OECD Council in accordance with the OECD Convention) and other legal instruments developed within the OECD framework (e.g. Declarations, international agreements).

All substantive OECD legal instruments, whether in force or abrogated, are listed in the online Compendium of OECD Legal Instruments. They are presented in five categories:

- **Decisions** are adopted by Council and are legally binding on all Members except those which abstain at the time of adoption. They set out specific rights and obligations and may contain monitoring mechanisms.
- **Recommendations** are adopted by Council and are not legally binding. They represent a political commitment to the principles they contain and entail an expectation that Adherents will do their best to implement them.
- **Substantive Outcome Documents** are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a ministerial, high-level or other meeting within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.
- **International Agreements** are negotiated and concluded within the framework of the Organisation. They are legally binding on the Parties.
- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several other types of substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.