



Declaration on Environment: Resource for the Future

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Background Information

The Declaration on Environment: Resource for the Future was adopted on 20 June 1985 by Governments of OECD Member Countries and Yugoslavia at the meeting of the Environment Committee at Ministerial Level (now called Environment Policy Committee). Affirming that continued improvement of the environment and sustained economic growth are essential objectives of OECD Member countries, Ministers declared that they will put in place comprehensive environmental policies, achieve emissions reduction and more effective management of waste and chemicals.

THE GOVERNMENTS OF OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES AND OF YUGOSLAVIA,

- a) Affirming that continued environmental improvement and sustained economic growth are essential, interrelated and mutually enhancing policy objectives for OECD Member countries;
- b) Aware that environmental policy is increasingly embracing natural resource management;
- c) Conscious of the need for strengthened and global efforts at national and international levels to resolve pressing environmental problems, taking into account in an appropriate manner environmental conditions and levels of economic development;
- d) Recognising that responsibilities and the need for action concerning environmental protection do not end at national frontiers and affirming the need to increase international co-operation in addressing environmental problems of a global or regional character or with impacts on neighbouring countries;
- e) Mindful of the OECD's role as a forum in which Member countries can promote integration of environmental, economic and other policies;
- f) Mindful also of the new directions for environmental policies set out in the conclusions adopted by the 1984 OECD Conference on Environment and Economics and by the 1985 Conference on International Co-operation concerning Transfrontier Movements of Hazardous Wastes;
- g) Conscious of the serious difficulties faced by developing countries in managing their environment;

DECLARE that they will:

1. Ensure that environmental considerations are taken fully into account at an early stage in the development and implementation of economic and other policies in such areas as agriculture, industry, energy and transport. They will promote effective integration of these policies, notably by:
 - Identifying complementary objectives;
 - Improving co-ordination between relevant authorities;
 - Improving aids for decision-making;
 - Extending the use of environmental impact assessment and appropriate economic instruments;
 - Increasing public involvement.
2. Address the need for improving environmental quality in urban areas through better co-ordination of environmental and other relevant policies;
3. Reduce overall pollution through comprehensive control, so that problems are not transferred from one part of the environment to another;
4. Achieve through vigorous national policies and international co-operation, early effective reductions of emissions of major air pollutants from stationary and mobile sources in order to achieve environmentally acceptable air quality and acid deposition levels and to prevent and combat damage to health and the environment;
5. Support efforts to introduce less-polluting motor vehicles, and to secure at an early stage an adequate supply of lead-free gasoline in all Member countries;
6. Achieve through shared and co-ordinated efforts more effective control of both new and existing chemicals, from their manufacture to ultimate disposal;

7. Strengthen control over the generation and disposal of hazardous wastes and establish an effective and legally binding system for control of their transfrontier movements, including movements to non-Member countries;
8. Seek to introduce more flexibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the design and enforcement of pollution control measures in particular through a consistent application of the Polluter-Pays Principle and a more effective use of economic instruments in conjunction with regulations;
9. Improve the management of natural resources, using an integrated approach, with a view to ensuring long-term environmental and economic sustainability. For this purpose, they will develop appropriate mechanisms and techniques including more accurate resource accounts;
10. Ensure the existence of appropriate measures to control potentially hazardous installations, including measures to prevent accidents;
11. Strengthen their efforts to contribute to environmentally-sound development in developing countries;
12. Address newly emerging environmental issues such as possible climatic change resulting from human activities and the environmental problems and promises of new, advanced technologies such as biotechnology;
13. Further develop, exchange and publish internationally comparable data on environmental conditions and promote more accurate projections in order to improve the basis for environmental management and provide better and more timely information for the public;
14. Pursue work in the OECD in support of these objectives.

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.