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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CLEARING-HOUSE  
MECHANISM JOINT REGIONAL MEETING  
FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE  
Prague, 9-11 September 2003

**ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA****INTRODUCTION**

1. Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.
2. The European Community Clearing-House Mechanism (EC CHM) was established pursuant to the implementation of the European Community Biodiversity Strategy and in accordance with Article 18, paragraph 3 of the Convention.
3. Within its programme of work, the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism seeks to provide information and to highlight capacity-building needs at a European Community level to address biodiversity-related critical issues such as the protection of ecosystems/habitats and species, including migratory birds, and sustainable use of biological resources, among others. The European Community Clearing-House Mechanism also participates in collaborative activities among national clearing-house mechanisms in Europe and seeks to promote coordination of data accessibility and use of clearing-house technologies.
4. In decision VI/18, the Conference of the Parties urged the Executive Secretary to convene additional capacity-building workshops at the national, subregional and regional levels referred to in decision V/14 of the Conference of the Parties for clearing-house activities and training in support of national capacities to implement the Convention.
5. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary and the European Environment Agency (EEA) have organized the present meeting to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to efforts by the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism to promote and facilitate technical

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and scientific cooperation, particularly in collaboration with recently established international thematic focal points and other relevant international initiatives and organizations.

6. The organization of the meeting also responds to the recommendation of the Informal Advisory Committee made at its meetings of 11 March 2001, 11 November 2001, 10 April 2002 and 9 March 2003, which requests the Executive Secretary to focus on the use of the clearing-house mechanism to promote technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention, including invasive alien species, the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), coastal and marine biodiversity and the ecosystem approach.

7. The meeting further supports recommendations made during the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), particularly paragraph 22 of recommendation VI/4, which called for the clearing-house mechanisms to be used to facilitate scientific and technical cooperation.

8. The meeting will consider issues relevant to the operation of the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism in the Central and Eastern Europe region. Specific objectives for the meeting include:

(a) To identify areas of collaboration between the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism with a view to increase capacities in the Central and Eastern Europe region, particularly within the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention;

(b) To determine the regional information requirements and mechanisms needed to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation activities under the Convention and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism programmes of work at a local and national level;

(c) To facilitate technical and scientific collaboration among countries of the region and between countries of the region and developed areas, particularly with regard to the use of new information technologies;

(d) To identify potential problems and suggest solutions in the implementation and ongoing development of the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and European Community Clearing-House Mechanism activities in the region, particularly in the use of new information technologies;

(e) To identify obstacles to the implementation of recommendations related to the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

#### *Participants*

9. All Parties of the Central and Eastern Europe region for the Convention as well as all countries having participated as member or observer to the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism project (EC CHM) Steering Committee were invited to nominate one expert, qualified in the fields of management of clearing-house mechanism issues, information-sharing systems, biodiversity information networks and database-management, and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism.

10. Nominations were requested from the national focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity on 10 July 2003.

11. In order to further assist the deliberations, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations have also been requested to submit their views and needs with regard to the operation of the Convention on

Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism, as well as any other relevant information they may wish to convey prior to the meeting.

12. In addition to these participants, representatives of the following organizations active in clearing-house mechanism issues have also been invited to participate as observers:

(a) The Commonwealth Knowledge Network (CKN), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), The Joint Secretariat (UNEP Regional Office for Europe and Council of Europe) for PEBLDS (Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the European Network for Biodiversity Information (ENBI);

(b) BirdLife International, BioNet International, Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), and Species 2000;

(c) Donor organizations, particularly from those Governments that have indicated their interest in funding capacity-building activities to enable the active participation of developing countries in pilot projects promoted by the clearing-house mechanism;

(d) The Chair of the Informal Advisory Committee, Clearing-House Mechanism.

#### *Documents*

13. A list of documents for the meeting is attached as annex I below.

#### *Expected outcome of the meeting*

14. It is expected that the meeting will facilitate a better definition of the needs of countries of the region with regard to the further development of the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism. It is also expected that new initiatives will emphasize participation between the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism, the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism and established international thematic focal points, and will recommend possible solutions to overcome the identified constraints and impediments.

15. The recommendations of the meeting will be communicated to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh meeting, to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 9 to 20 February 2004.

### **ITEM 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

16. The meeting will be held in Prague, the Czech Republic. It will be opened by the Executive Secretary, or his representative, and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism Executive Director, at 9 a.m. on 9 September 2003.

### **ITEM 2. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

#### ***2.1. Election of officers***

17. The meeting will be invited to elect its Chair and Rapporteur from among its members. Proposals will be made from the floor.

## **2.2. Adoption of agenda**

18. The meeting will be invited to adopt its agenda on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CBD/CHM/CEE.Reg/1/1).

## **2.3. Organization of work**

19. The proposed programme of work for the meeting is shown in annex II below.

20. Participants will be invited to discuss the issues relevant to the promotion of technical and scientific cooperation as reflected in decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, recommendations of the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and recommendations of the Informal Advisory Committee for the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the work programme of the European Community Clearing-house Mechanism, as well as issues pertaining to regional needs assessment in relation to use and future development of Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-house Mechanism. To facilitate these discussions, it is proposed that these issues be clustered under two headings:

(a) Implementation of a joint work plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention;

(b) Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the joint work plan;

21. Each of these headings will encompass various relevant issues. Following an introduction to the topic, participants will be invited to discuss relevant issues, with a view to making recommendations relevant to the objectives of the meeting.

### **ITEM 3. DISCUSSION ON JOINT INITIATIVES BETWEEN THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM IN SUPPORT OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION ACROSS THE PROGRAMME AND CROSS-CUTTING AREAS OF THE CONVENTION**

22. The Secretariat and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism will make short presentations on issues relevant to this item-based decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties and the programme of work of the European Community Clearing-house Mechanism. Observers to the meeting will also be invited to make brief presentations on their potential role in promoting cooperation among global information networks and mechanisms and regional and global initiatives. Accordingly, it is proposed that this item of the agenda covers the following elements:

(a) Joint initiatives pertaining to invasive alien species, particularly within the context of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP);

(b) Global Taxonomy Initiative and taxonomic authorities, including metadata and controlled vocabularies;

(c) Communication networks for indigenous and local communities;

(d) Implementation of subregional biodiversity networks;

(e) Use of new information technologies, including the EUNIS database and the clearing-house mechanism toolkit;

(f) Joint initiatives with recently established international thematic focal points in issues related to marine and coastal biodiversity and protected areas.

23. These issues will be considered in the light of decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties, paragraph 22 of SBSTTA recommendation VI/4, the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism programme of work and the minutes of the meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee for the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism, held on 9 March 2003.

#### **ITEM 4. REGIONAL NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES**

24. In considering this item, the Regional Meeting will be invited to consider the regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to a joint work plan between the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism and the European Community Clearing-House Mechanism. The Regional Meeting will also be invited to reflect upon the potential role of international thematic focal points and international networks and initiatives, and regional capacities needed, to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation, particularly within the context of the programme areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention.

25. Possible group discussions that could be held under this item with a view to determining options for technical and scientific collaboration include:

- (a) Setting of priorities;
- (b) Harmonization of initiatives and activities;
- (c) Roles and responsibilities;
- (d) Planned activities.

#### **ITEM 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

26. Participants will be invited to formulate general conclusions and recommendations on the issues considered at this meeting.

#### **ITEM 6. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

27. Participants will consider and adopt the report of the meeting, on the basis of the draft report of the meeting and draft recommendations to be presented by the Rapporteur.

#### **ITEM 7. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

28. It is expected that the meeting will be closed at 5 p.m. on 11 September 2003.

*Annex I*

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE MEETING ON THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND EUROPEAN COMMUNITY  
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

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Participants are requested to bring their copies of the documents to the meeting.**

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*Working documents*

UNEP/CBD/CHM/CEE.Reg/1/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/CBD/CHM/CEE.Reg/1/1/Add.1	Annotations to the provisional agenda

*Background information documents*

Decision VI/18 of the Conference of the Parties

Minutes of the meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee for the Convention on Biological Diversity Clearing-House Mechanism, held in Montreal on 9 March 2003 1/

Report of the Informal Meeting on Formats, Protocols and Standards for Improved Exchange of Biodiversity-related Information, held in Montreal from 19 to 20 February 2002 2/

The clearing-house mechanism matrix of work 3/

European Community Clearing House Mechanism tasks 2003EUNIS database  
<http://eunis.eea.eu.int/eunis3/eunis.jsp>

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1/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/chm/chmiac-2001/official/chmiac-2001-03-11-minutes-en.pdf>.

2/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-06/information/cop-06-inf-18-en.pdf>.

3/ <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/ref/chm-matrix-work-en.pdf>.

*Annex II*

**PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE  
MEETING ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM AND THE EUROPEAN  
COMMUNITY CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

<i>9 September 2003</i>	
9 a.m.	<i>Item 1: Opening of the meeting</i>
9.15 - 9.30 a.m.	<i>Item 2: Organizational matters:</i> 2.1. <i>Election of officers;</i> 2.2. <i>Adoption of the agenda;</i> 2.3. <i>Organization of work.</i>
9.30 -10.30 a.m.	<i>Item 3. The implementation of joint initiatives in support of technical and scientific cooperation across the programme and cross-cutting areas of the Convention</i>
10.30-11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Presentations under item 3
1 – 2 p.m.	Lunch
2 – 3.30 p.m.	<i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations</i>
3.30 - 4 p.m.	Break
4 – 5 p.m. -	<i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i>
<i>10 September 2003</i>	
9 - 10 a.m.	<i>Item 4. Regional needs to implement effectively recommendations related to the potential joint initiatives</i>
10 -10.30 a.m.	Presentations under item 4
10.30-11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Presentations under item 4 ( <i>continued</i> )
1 - 2 p.m.	Lunch
2 – 3.30 p.m.	Discussion under item 4
3.30 - 4 p.m.	Break
4 – 5 p.m.	Conclusion
<i>11 September 2003</i>	
9 – 10.30 a.m.	Discussion under agenda item 4 ( <i>continued</i> )
10.30-11 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	<i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i>
1 - 2 p.m.	Lunch
2 – 3.30 p.m.	<i>Item 5. Conclusions and recommendations (continued)</i>
3.30 - 4 p.m.	Break
4 – 5 p.m.	<i>Item 6. Adoption of the report</i>
5 p.m.	<i>Item 7. Closure of the meeting</i>

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