

Proposal for a THE PEP contribution to a side-event at UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris

Draft proposal prepared by the secretariat

For side events or an exhibit to be organized at COP21 in Paris, only Parties, Observer, and UN system organizations are eligible to apply for a slot. The joint UNECE and WHO secretariat of THE PEP, based on a request from THE PEP Steering Committee is exploring different options to highlight THE PEP as a regional policy platform to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, local pollutions from transport and overall to promote healthier societies through the development of concrete partnerships and tools that define a shared agenda owned by the Ministries of transport, health and environment of the pan-European region. A side event would be an excellent opportunity to show-case some of the experiences developed under THE PEP and to propose it as a concrete way to support the implementation of the global commitments on climate change.

The Secretariat is following two possible leads to organize/contribute to the COP21 side event including:

- Contribution to a side event within the context of UNS side event (Box 1) namely the side event on Health (including air pollution) or
- Side event to be sponsored by one or more member States.

The current concept note has been developed to describe a possible contribution to such an event.

Box 1. Background information on UNS side event

For UN System organizations, the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) Working Group is providing a system-wide coordination for the preparation of UNS side events. THE PEP has expressed its interest to the HLCP Working Group in co-leading or be a partner in the group for a new thematic area on Policy integration and intersectoral coordination but the proposal was not accepted. Following a recent consolidated list of UNS side events, which was approved by the HLCP Working Group, the thematic area on Health (including air pollution) will be co-led by WHO and UNECE. THE PEP could contribute to this side event since both organizations that serve the secretariat are co-leading the session.

Title: The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP): a Regional policy platform to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution from transport with the overall aim to promote healthier societies

Aim

To highlight the results of THE PEP as a unique intersectoral policy platform through which ministries of transport, health and environment of the member States in the pan-European Region work on a common agenda that supports the achievement of their global commitments to reduce local pollutants and greenhouse gases emissions from the transport sector, while providing important co-benefits to health and environment as well as meeting the mobility demand.

Scope

Travel and transport are essential parts of modern life. We depend on transport to travel to work, for shopping and for leisure. The choice to drive a car, take the bus, train, or other public transport, or walk or ride our bike is determined by many factors, including safety, availability, price, quality and ease of access, to mention but a few. Walking and cycling can also contribute to our health and well-being through physical activity. But unsustainable transport has harmful effects on the environment and on our health – through congestion, accidents, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions – all of which need to be curbed.

Recognizing the crucial connection between transport, health and the environment, in 2002 the Ministries of Transport, Health and Environment established the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP) as a unique intersectoral policy platform to promote transport strategies that integrate environmental and health concerns. There is also a need to make transport systems, cities and communities more resilient to climate change. THE PEP is serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and its Environment and Transport programmes, and by the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. THE PEP agenda is defined at High Level Meetings, the last one of which took place in Paris, France, in 2014, resulting in the adoption of the Paris Declaration: *City in motion: people first!*

A defining feature of THE PEP way of working is its strong orientation towards the development and dissemination of concrete tools, through the establishment of outcome-oriented partnerships; the strengthening of capacities; the sharing of experiences through a series of thematic workshops (the Relay Race); and the support provided to member States' national policy development. These examples of partnerships and tools could be proposed at the side event as a concrete way to support the implementation of the global commitments on climate change.

One of the priority goals set by ministers under THE PEP is to reduce emissions of transport-related greenhouse gases, air pollutants and noise by supporting a shift in the vehicle fleet towards zero- or low-emission vehicles and fuels based on renewable energy, promoting a shift towards clean transport modes and fostering electric mobility and eco-driving. Eco-driving is promoted by THE PEP as a well-established way of smart and fuel-efficient driving of private passenger cars, trucks, buses, tractors and locomotives. It makes best use of advanced vehicle technologies, improves traffic safety and could considerably contribute to a reduction of emissions and pollution. Eco-driving procedures and training are already well established in some countries.

Successful climate change mitigation needs increasingly more sophisticated ways of assessing the opportunity costs and relative effectiveness of alternative policy strategies. ForFITS, a scenario building tool developed by UNECE, enhances the ability of policy makers to make informed decisions.

Sustainable transport can be assessed in ForFITS by creating simulations of policy choices and allowing users to easily visualize and compare their impacts on CO₂ emissions. Within the context of THE PEP, ForFITS has been applied in Kaunas, Lithuania [With adequate planning it could be applied to Paris.]

Health economic assessment tools (HEAT) are a web-based and user-friendly instrument, which estimates the economic value of reduced mortality that results from regular walking or cycling. HEAT intends to be a part of a comprehensive cost-benefit analyses of transport interventions or infrastructure projects and complements existing tools for economic valuations of transport interventions, for example on emissions or congestions. The tool has already been applied in several countries.

THE PEP Partnership on cycling aims to develop a pan-European Master Plan for Cycling Promotion, supported by guidelines and tools to assist in the development of cycling promotion policies at the national level. By promoting cycling on the pan-European, national, regional and local level the responsible authorities jointly address issues of congestion, air pollution, noise, road traffic accidents and lack of physical activity.

THE PEP Partnership on jobs in green and healthy transport was launched to stimulate a debate and shared understanding on jobs in green and healthy transport, analyse the potential for greening “old” jobs and creating “new green” jobs in transport and mobility and assess the qualitative and quantitative impacts on the environment, health, transport and economy.

Format

At the moment there are two possible options.

- Full-fledged dedicated side event on THE PEP - 90 min. Side event could bring together experts and representatives of member States, who would elaborate on how they can “use” THE PEP to implement their commitments on climate change. A short panel discussion with the experts will be followed by an interactive discussion with the audience. It would be difficult (impossible at this stage) to have this option as UNS side event. Therefore, this option will be possible only through member States’ sponsorship.
- Intervention of THE PEP integrated into other side event such as on Health (including air pollution). In this option the allocated time will be much shorter and could be limited to only limited number of speakers.

Partners/Conveners

- With the UN Systems, the side event on Health (including air pollution) is co-led by WHO and UNECE and the other partners, including UNICEF, FAO, CBD, UNEP and WMO
- For the option with member States, the Government of France has already indicated its interest to work with UNECE and WHO.

Next steps

For the secretariat

- Follow up ongoing discussions with UNS and HCLP Working Group with respect to the UNS side events
- Explore with the Bureau the potential interests from member States either to include THE PEP in the one of the side events or to sponsor full-fledged side event on THE PEP