

UN Economic Commission for Europe

Environmental Performance Reviews

**EPR of Lithuania:
Report on Follow-up**



UNITED NATIONS
Geneva, August 2000

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The EPR report was issued around the end of 1998, including the recommendations that had been made by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy during its Peer Review of 29 September, 1998. The recommendations and the report received wide circulation among professional and NGOs in Lithuania. The Lithuanian authorities were not surprised by the recommendations, as they are not markedly different from other evaluations made by international institutions. Nevertheless, the report was used in a variety of ways, by a substantial number of users (different ministries, regional departments of the Ministry of Environment, agencies, municipalities, researchers and students). The most important use was as a reference work in the preparation of general policy and management positions, even the development of policy priorities in special areas of concern, in work with the public, and for study and research purposes in respective institutions. The comprehensiveness of the report, its balanced structure and presentation, as well as its origin from a 'neutral' international institutions as opposed to national authors were the features that accounted for this use. The full report was translated into Lithuanian language, but its publication is impeded by lack of funds and may occur this fall. However, the Lithuanian version of the report is in the Internet.

In seeking membership of the European Union, the Lithuanian Government, including its Ministry of Environment, is strongly focused on accession requirements. At the same time, the Ministry of Environment makes a considerable and successful effort of managing and improving environmental conditions in the country, in addition to the accession work and in areas not directly affected by it. As a result, a balanced evolution of problem solutions is the most characteristic feature of Lithuanian environmental management at this time. To give a few important examples, the consistency of the overall legal system is increasing through further revisions of laws and by-laws. Their implementation has started to be prepared. The development of the intended economic instruments for environmental protection being more or less concluded, the optimization of their application has started. Environmental standards are revised, and a revised monitoring programme is developed. The development of a national territorial planning system develops according to plans. International cooperation with the Baltic Sea neighbours is being pursued and extended at the same time as EU accession is sought.

Two generally more problematic areas continue to prevail. The first is the funding difficulties, which affect the environmental sector perhaps even more than other sectors of government. The second concerns the development of cooperation across governmental institutions. While good cooperation was installed between e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment, the same development did not occur with all other ministries. Such cooperation and, thus, the definition of mutually agreeable solutions to common problems appears too often to depend on the initiatives of the individual staff in the different ministries concerned. It can probably be expected that both these problem areas receive at least partial solution as the EU accession process unfolds. The growing access to EU funding mechanisms, as well as the probably growing awareness for common interest of different ministries in the process will be responsible for such improvement.

PART I: THE FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Chapter 1: Legal instruments and institutional arrangements

GENERAL TENDENCY

In addition to the substantial legal work necessary in the EU accession process, many legal instruments that are outside this process have to be improved, and this work also requires substantial resources. This work is impeded by the very tight budgetary situation. Furthermore, the institutional structure of Lithuanian government as a whole is not yet stable. Concerning the environmental ministry, the trend seems to be to reduce institutional responsibilities to core activities, and to cut linkages to other administrations and institutions. The Ministry of Environment tries to maintain satisfactory levels of coordination through the National Commission on Sustainable Development on one side (for coordination with public institutions), and the Advisory Council of the Ministry (an open-ended group reserved for non-governmental members) on the other. Improvement of relations with NGOs is also expected from the ratification of the Aarhus Convention. Regarding the development of environmental information, the adoption of a new and comprehensive monitoring programme is to be mentioned. In addition, Lithuania hopes to be able to join the EEA and to realize further improvements in the environmental information system thereafter.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1:

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ASSUME THE ROLE OF COORDINATOR AND BRING TOGETHER SECTORAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS IN GOVERNMENT POLICY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE COUNCIL SHOULD ADVISE ON THE OPTIMAL LEVEL OF DECENTRALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING WITH A VIEW TO MAXIMUM ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY ENFORCEMENT. FINALLY, THE COUNCIL SHOULD ALSO SEE TO IT THAT AN ADEQUATE GENERAL LEVEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IS ACHIEVED WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING CONSISTENCY BETWEEN SECTORAL PROGRAMMES AND ACTIONS IN THE APPROXIMATION PROCESS.

Efforts to create the National Commission (renamed for formal reasons) for Sustainable Development continue, and a Cabinet decision is expected in July, 2000. If approved, the Commission would be headed by the Minister of Environment, the Health Care and Labour Ministers would be deputies, and high level of six other ministries would be members. In addition, all other levels of administration would be represented, too, including municipalities. The Commission would thus be able to work in accordance with the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2:

THE PRACTICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW ON PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF 1995 SHOULD BE REMOVED. LITHUANIA SHOULD CONSIDER PARTICIPATING IN EU EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES LIKE "LEONARDO" OR "SOKRATES". A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTS AT ALL LEVELS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

Complaints about the implementation of the law are not known at present. Lithuanian schools participate in EU programme "Sokrates" implementing several environmental education projects. According to the agreement, The Qualification Improvement System and Training Programmes for Environmental Specialists of the Republic of Lithuania have been developed with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University and adopted (Order of the Minister of Environment No 225 of 19 11 1998).

RECOMMENDATION 1.3:

THE RESOURCES OF THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT AND OF OTHER UNITS DEALING WITH PROJECT MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED.

RECOMMENDATION 1.4:

A PROGRAMME SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES TO PROMOTE THE LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN TERRITORIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT. THE PROGRAMME SHOULD, IN PARTICULAR, REFER TO (A) GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, (B) IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH NGOs, AND (C) TRAINING OF LAWYERS REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS ON SPATIAL PLANNING AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Programmes and Projects Management Unit was enlarged by one staff to four persons in autumn 1999. A Financial Memorandum between Lithuania and the EC Delegation in Lithuania was signed in December 1998, and has to the project "Strengthening of the Institutional Capacity of the Ministry of Environment in the Integration Process". The Project includes support to the Environmental Strategy and Investment Unit. At present, four projects for institutional strengthening are on their way. Training of municipal units is undertaken in the frameworks of the Know-How programme of the UK, and the ISPA programme.

An Advisory Council of the Ministry of Environment was established in February 1999. It includes only non-governmental members. The Council has actively contributed to the development of the draft "Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of Lithuania". The law on territorial planning includes provisions for public participation at local level. Seminars are being organized twice a year on the legal basis for territorial planning, including information on public participation. Item C of the recommendation is not followed up at this time.

RECOMMENDATION 1.5:

MONITORING DATA SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN REGARD OF BOTH THEIR NEED IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING AND THEIR COMPARABILITY WITH DATA IN OTHER COUNTRIES. AN INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. ITS PRIORITY SHOULD BE TO ADDRESS THE INFORMATION NEEDS FOR (A) THE FORMULATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, (B) THE SUPERVISION OF THE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, (C) INVESTIGATIONS INTO CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, (D) SETTING ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS, AND (E) INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

In 1998, a new National Environmental Monitoring Programme (NEMP) was approved. It is oriented towards the relevant EU requirements and is valid for six years. It is felt to have substantially improved the old system. The programme covers all separate public monitoring systems in the country, independent of the responsible agency. The Ministry of Environment owns a total of 140 monitoring sites in the programme (96 water sites in 47 rivers, and 44 land-based sites, of which 3 are integrated sites). Lack of adequate funding limits the full operation of the programme. Implementation of the programme is entrusted to the Steering Committee, created in 1998.

Lithuania intends to join the EEA. Negotiations will proceed in July, 2000. The European Environment and Observation Network EIONET's node was installed in the Joint Research Centre of the Ministry of Environment.

In September 1999, the Information Management Division was set up at the Ministry. It is in charge of the development of an integrated environmental information system. The Danish Environmental Protection Agency provides support to the project "Lithuania Long-term Assistance on Information and Reporting".

In developing a policy towards increased public awareness and environmental education, the Lithuanian Public Environmental Education Strategy and Action Programme (education, training and awareness) by the year 2002 was adopted in 1998, and the Order on Public Access to Environmental Information in 1999.

The system of information dissemination and use is judged satisfactory. Ambient quality data are available in the Internet since 1998.

Chapter 2: Integration of environmental and economic decisions

GENERAL TENDENCY

The main orientations of the work under this heading are (a) the reduction of actual pollution levels, (b) the promotion of cleaner production, and (c) the priority inclusion of the new economic instruments into waste management. The adoption of the Law on Pollution Charges was a great step forward, and major changes in the now existing toolkit of economic instruments for environmental protection are not envisaged.

RECOMMENDATION 2.1:

POLLUTION CHARGES OUGHT TO INCREASE IN ORDER TO INDUCE POLLUTERS TO INTERNALIZE EXTERNAL COSTS. THE POLLUTER-PAYS PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE APPLIED AND THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE PROMOTED.

The new Law on Pollution Charges which was passed by Parliament in May 1999. It foresees the progressive increase of rates for the main pollutants (together with a substantial decrease in the number of pollutants groups for which payment is due). The Law is in force since 1 January, 2000.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2:

THE EFFICIENCY OF EXISTING ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS HAS TO BE ANALYSED. SUCH AN ANALYSIS SHOULD, IN PARTICULAR, SHED LIGHT ON THE PACE AT WHICH TAXES, CHARGES AND EXCISE DUTIES CAN BE RAISED WITHOUT THREATENING BUSINESS ACTIVITY AS SUCH. THE ANALYSIS SHOULD ALSO BE USED TO DESIGN FEEDBACK MECHANISMS FOR BUSINESS REACTIONS TO THE APPLIED ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS.

The efficiency of existing instruments was analysed by Harvard University in an extensive research project starting in 1994 and ending in 1998. The results from the project were used to determine the new charges and charge rates in the Law referred to in the comment on the preceding recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3:

A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT TO AVOID REPEATING PROCEDURES AND GAIN EXPERIENCE AND CLOUT AND TO OPTIMIZE PROPOSED INSTRUMENTS.

The only project carried out in this regard is a cost estimation of approximating Lithuanian environmental legislation to that of the European Union. The study was done during 1996-2000, for the coming 25-years period.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4:

IN THE SHORT RUN, INCENTIVES SHOULD BE CREATED FOR BUSINESSES TO MAKE THEIR PRODUCTION FACILITIES MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY.

RECOMMENDATION 2.5:

THE LEGISLATION SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL FUND FOR INVESTMENTS WILL BE THE MAIN AND LASTING SOURCE OF SPECIAL FUNDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHILE THE OTHER FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE ARE ONLY TEMPORARY.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6:

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD OVERSEE THE INTEGRATION OF LITHUANIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DECISIONS INTO ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

The system of taxes included in the new Law on Pollution Charges (for details see the comment on Recommendation 2.1) are the main incentives. The charge system includes provisions for tax exemptions in defined cases of environmental investments. Also, subsidies may be given from the NEPF, but this instrument is little used at present.

From 2001 onward, the will continue, while the National Environmental Protection Fund will be discontinued. Instead, a separate budget line in the State budget will receive 80 per cent of the taxes currently to be paid to the NEPF, while the remaining 20 per cent will be contributed to the Environmental Fund for Investments. The mentioned budget line will be earmarked for use in environmental protection programmes. The future use of Municipal Environmental Protection Funds is to be decided by the municipal administrations.

See comment on Recommendation 1.1.

Chapter 3: Introduction of cleaner, safer and more sustainable technologies in industry

GENERAL TENDENCY

The central instrument for promoting the introduction of cleaner technologies is the permitting system. In anticipation of the eventual transposition and subsequent implementation of the IPPC Directive of the EU, an interim revision of the permitting system incorporated the item of cleaner technology in the permits. In anticipating the increased introduction of cleaner technologies through substantial investments, the focus of intermediate measures is on improved housekeeping through technological change in existing production processes. Interest from the industrial sector is big in both directions. Lithuania signed the 'Cleaner Production Declaration' in March, 2000.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1:

A KEY PRIORITY FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS TO DRAW AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION. TO THIS END:

- (1) SELF-MONITORING BY INDUSTRY SHOULD IMPROVE AND BECOME MORE RELIABLE;***
- (2) DATA WHICH ARE TRANSMITTED BY INDUSTRY SHOULD BE COMPILED, ANALYSED (AT LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS, PER ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIUM, PER SECTOR OF ACTIVITY, ETC.) AND COMPARED WITH GOVERNMENTAL DATA;***
- (3) INFORMATION SHOULD BE PUBLISHED; AND***
- (4) THE STAFF OF THE MINISTRY (I.E. THE STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY UNIT) AND REGIONAL INSPECTORS CONCERNED WITH CLEANER TECHNOLOGY ISSUES SHOULD BE TRAINED TO BECOME PARTNERS AND/OR COUNSELLORS OF INDUSTRY IN THE INTRODUCTION OF CLEANER TECHNOLOGIES.***

1. The Order of the Minister for Environment No 387 on "Obtaining of a Permit for the Use of Natural Resources and for the Discharge of Pollutants into the Environment" was extended in November 1999. It now includes a new part "Environmental Monitoring", and the annexed "Ordinance for the monitoring of waste-water discharges" was updated. Industry is obliged to self-monitor. The quality assurance scheme was revised in 1998 and corresponds to EU norms. See also commendation on Recommendation 3.2.
2. During the 1998 HELCOM Implementation Reporting Round, data of industrial plants in different sectors (chemical, glass, leather, paper industry, food processing, oil refinery, metal surface treatment) were compared with recommended emission limit values, and reports were prepared on the implementation of HELCOM recommendations in different sectors of Lithuanian industry.
3. Annual reports on "Environment Protection in Lithuania" contain, since 1998, information on emissions of pollutants into the environment and generated amounts of wastes in main Lithuanian industrial branches and plants.
4. The Lithuanian-Norwegian Cleaner Production Capacity Building Programme, 55 industrial companies, 6 regional inspectors and 1 specialist from the Ministry of Environment took part in four Cleaner Production Schools (in the form of 5 sessions of 2 to 3 days each, over a period of six months). Recently, the fifth course started, in which 4 regional inspectors and 1 specialist from the Ministry of Environment participated together with specialists from industrial plants. Interest of industry in these schools is big. No specific training of environmental inspectors has occurred.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2:

AN ACCREDITATION SYSTEM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, PAYING ATTENTION ALSO TO LABORATORIES INVOLVED IN INDUSTRIAL SELF-MONITORING.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3:

THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE THE ACCELERATED INTRODUCTION OF THE ISO 14000 SERIES INTO ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT, AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EMAS STANDARDS.

RECOMMENDATION 3.4:

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FORMULATE A COORDINATED STRATEGY AND A NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR INTRODUCING CLEANER TECHNOLOGY STEPWISE. IN THIS PROCESS, RESPONSIBILITIES SHOULD BE SHARED BETWEEN THE MINISTRIES OF THE ENVIRONMENT, OF AGRICULTURE, OF THE ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY. THE POLLUTION-PREVENTION PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE THE CORNERSTONE OF THE PROGRAMME, IN WHICH PRIORITIES COULD BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF COST ESTIMATES FOR INDIVIDUAL MEASURES. THE PROGRAMME SHOULD BE BACKED UP WITH LAWS AND FINANCE. ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING TO ASSESS THE PERFORMANCES REACHED WITHIN THE DEADLINES SHOULD BE A PART OF THE PROGRAMME, AS SHOULD THE DISCLOSURE OF THE RELATED INFORMATION. SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION 12.5.

Ten environmental resource laboratories are working according to ISO 45001, 45002 and 45003, in accordance with a quality assurance and control system and are taking part in international intercalibration.

Industrial laboratories are carrying out the self-monitoring. They are working according to permits, under the Order No. 1 of 4 January 1999, "On the procedure for issuing permits to laboratories performing emission control and environmental study". Participation in intercalibration exercises is a condition for obtaining the permit. The laboratories are controlled by the Lithuanian Joint Research Centre and the laboratories of the Regional Departments. The Joint Research Centre certifies the laboratories, and is itself fully internationally certified. Certification today covers about 80 per cent of international requirements. The system in force was developed with Swedish assistance.

Interest in EMS is big among Lithuanian industry. The Ministry of Environment promotes EMS in the framework of existing cooperation projects. See also the comment on Recommendation 3.4.

The Lithuanian-Norwegian project of "Capacity Building and Training in Environmental Management Systems and Environmental Auditing" (1999) has three parts. The first was a general course, for a wide target group, on EMS, particularly ISO14000. The second was a specialised and more intensive course on environmental auditing, and qualifying auditors according to internationally recognised criteria. 19 environmental auditors have been examined. A third phase will be devoted to the dissemination of the project results.

One company in the sector of storage of petroleum products has been certified according to ISO14001. Three other international projects for creating an EMS complying with ISO 14000 have started in 1999, in the food industry, the textile industry and the electroplating industry.

The Ministry of Economy prepared, in 1999, the National Plan of Measures for the Introduction of Cleaner Production, with the assistance from the Ministry of Environment. It foresees financial mechanisms for implementation. The Plan, once adopted, will be incorporated into the National Strategy for Industrial Development.

RECOMMENDATION 3.5:

THE PERMITS SHOULD BE BASED BOTH ON MEDIA QUALITY OBJECTIVES AND ON EMISSION LIMIT VALUES, AND SHOULD COVER ALL POSSIBLE DISCHARGES TO THE DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIA TOGETHER. LEGAL AND ECONOMIC PRESSURE SHOULD BE EXERTED TO MINIMIZE THE GENERATION OF ALL WASTE RESIDUALS. MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT OF COMPLIANCE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS.

RECOMMENDATION 3.6:

A SYSTEM OF INCENTIVES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF CLEANER TECHNOLOGIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE INFORMED AND TRAINED TO IMPROVE ITS MANAGEMENT SKILLS. THE REQUIRED INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COULD BE PROVIDED ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS, INVOLVING INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE POLLUTION PREVENTION CENTRE. PREFERENTIAL CONDITIONS, SUCH AS SUBSIDIES, SOFT LOANS AND TAX REBATES, SHOULD BE GRANTED FOR BOOSTING THE INTRODUCTION OF CLEANER PRODUCTION PROCESSES. THEY COULD BE ATTRIBUTED FOREMOST TO THOSE ENTERPRISES THAT HAVE ALREADY BENEFITED FROM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND THAT ARE INTRODUCING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

Denmark and Lithuania cooperate in a Waste and IPPC Approximation Project. In this framework, a first draft format of future IPPC permits has been prepared in 1999. New integrated permits are based both on media quality objectives and on emission limit values, and should be valid for new installations from 2003, and for existing installations from 2007.

The strategy for the promotion of cleaner technologies has two components. For companies falling under the future IPPC system, the related introduction of BAT will be promoted through the definition of tax exemptions. Other companies will be regulated through the definition of sectoral emission norms.

Chapter 4: Spatial planning

GENERAL TENDENCY

The territorial planning routines at national level have improved steadily during the transition process. The decision to produce a territorial plan was taken in 1993. The preparation of the corresponding law followed, and led to its adoption in December 1995, followed by the elaboration of the necessary by-laws and the scheme for the database. All these developments were financed from the State budget, testifying of adequate support to planning. The preparation of the 'Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of Lithuania' started in 1996 and was also financed from the State budget. The work started with an evaluation of the existing situation, submitted extensively to public scrutiny, from which trends, targets predictions, and the plan itself are being derived. The adoption of the plan from a Special Commission is expected in the course of the current year. The plan will then be submitted, for approval, to Government and Parliament. Sustainable development of Lithuania is the guiding principle of the plan.

Lithuania participated actively in the development of the European Spatial Development Perspective. The plan will be in harmony with the Perspective, and will also take Baltic 21 into account.

RECOMMENDATION 4.1:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLEARLY STATED NATIONAL SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY COULD ACCELERATE THE TRANSITION PROCESS. THE POLICY SHOULD BE BASED ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT UNDER CONDITIONS OF A MARKET ECONOMY. THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE MADE EFFECTIVE.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2:

THE RECENTLY DEVELOPMENT COMMON DATABASE ON SPATIAL PLANNING ISSUES SHOULD ALSO RECEIVE RELEVANT DATA INPUT FROM THE DATABASES OF OTHER MINISTRIES, BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS. ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN TERRITORIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE GRANTED EASY ACCESS TO THIS DATABASE.

A 'Comprehensive Plan of the Territory of Lithuania' is under preparation. It is based on sustainable development principles under conditions of a market economy. A spatial planning concept is foreseen in it. At the moment, the evaluation of the existing situation and the first draft of the solutions are being prepared. The draft of the plan was extensively submitted to public scrutiny and discussion. See also comment to Recommendation 1.4.

Spatial planning at the local level is the legal responsibility of local authorities. The legal provisions prescribe partnership between the local authority and the private sector during both the period of the preparation of the spatial plans and the period of plan implementation.

The implementation of the general scheme for the relevant information exchange is delayed for lack of funds. At present, improvements are slowly realised in traditional ways of information exchange, but ongoing institutional re-organizations impede progress at the national level. The Register of the territorial planning documents is available for public use. In anticipation of technological improvements, regional and local staff is being trained in the requirements of the future scheme.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3:

PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO MAKING THE LAND MARKET MORE EFFECTIVE BY SPEEDING UP THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND VALUATION INSTITUTIONS AND SKILLS, SO THAT LAND AND REAL PROPERTY VALUES CAN BE DETERMINED.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES SHOULD BE FULLY APPLIED IN THE DECISION-MAKING ON TRANSIT MOTORWAYS, PUTTING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ON A PAR WITH OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5:

LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD TAKE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPAIRING AND MODERNIZING THE HOUSING STOCK. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE THE PREPARATION OF SIMPLE-TO-APPLY AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK. SOME OF THE INCOME FROM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THE SALE OF REAL ESTATE SHOULD BE EARMARKED FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BUILDING STOCK.

The land market has started to function, more in urban than in rural areas. In neither case, the absence of land valuation expertise is felt to be an impediment to market functioning.

A revision of the EIA law was approved by Parliament in April, 2000. Transit motorways are included, like other motorways and national roads, in the list of objects, for which EIA is obligatory. The "Via Baltica" was subject to an EIA.

Only partial solutions are being brought to the problem. Local authorities are participating in the repair of housing stock of cultural heritage, the modernisation of water use and heat supply facilities in buildings. A Law on Communities of Owners of Multi-storey Houses is under preparation, which will stress the role of local authorities. A World Bank project on energy efficiency in housing is being coordinated by the Housing and Urban Development Foundation. Some measures have been taken by the Vilnius municipality in the repair of the old town housing stock regardless of its ownership.

Chapter 5: International cooperation

GENERAL TENDENCY

The preparation of the accession to the EU is obviously among the outstanding priorities for Lithuania in the area of international cooperation, and a special small unit for European integration was created in the Ministry for Environment. At the same time, the division of international cooperation continues to view the implementation of Lithuania's bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements as its first priority. In bilateral cooperation, funding arrangements play a prominent role, in addition to the substantive problems, for which the agreement was made. Work on international Conventions looms large in multilateral cooperation.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1:

ROUTINES FOR COOPERATION SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN ALL INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS THAT ARE INTERSECTORAL.

Staff responsible for contacts with the Ministry of Environment are nominated in all ministries and other institutions having a role in environmental management, for better management of international inter-sectoral projects. These nominations are particularly successful in those sectors, which are included in Programme Baltic 21. Joint Working Groups for integrated programmes and projects can be created by the Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2:

LITHUANIA SHOULD RATIFY ALL UN/ECE CONVENTIONS AND RELATED PROTOCOLS ON TRANSBOUNDARY ISSUES. IT SHOULD ALSO REASSESS ITS PRIORITIES CONCERNING THE RATIFICATION OF THE BONN AND WASHINGTON CONVENTIONS.

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context was ratified on 7 October 1999 (Law on Ratification No VIII-1351). The ratification process for the Bonn and Washington Conventions has started with their official translation into the Lithuanian language and the necessary consultations with the other Ministries. The submission of the required decision to the Cabinet is currently pending.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3:

CONCRETE PLANS FOR EU/PHARE PROJECTS, INCLUDING TWINNING PROJECTS, SHOULD BE WORKED OUT AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY, IN ORDER TO PREPARE SMOOTHLY FOR THE UPCOMING EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS, AND IMPLEMENT EU DIRECTIVES IN THE MOST EXPEDIENT WAY.

Since the preparation of the EPR report, the accession process of Lithuania to the EU has been substantially accelerated. At present, 18 transposition or implementation programmes for EU requirements are finally prepared, and 6 more are under development (expected to be concluded at the end of the year). They basically conclude this phase, after which more projects can be financed. Present concerns are with the availability of sufficient ministerial staff resources for the implementation of the related programmes and projects.

PART II: MANAGEMENT OF POLLUTION AND OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Chapter 6: Air management

GENERAL TENDENCY

The future management of sulphur emissions from the energy sector (particularly following the closure of the Ignalina power plant), nitrogen emissions from the transport and petrol distribution sectors, and VOC emissions from industries are identified as the most important areas of air management concerns. Due to decreasing use of fuel in transport (explained by shrinking truck fleet in the country, reduced transport performance, increased energy efficiency of vehicles), air emissions from mobile sources are not considered a major problem area in the near future.

RECOMMENDATION 6.1:

THE REVISION OF THE LAW ON CLEAN AIR OF 1981 SHOULD BE A PRIORITY. THE NEW LAW SHOULD PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ALL MATTERS OF ENFORCEMENT. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LAW SHOULD CLARIFY THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION IN AIR MANAGEMENT. IT SHOULD ALSO HELP TO DEVELOP ROUTINES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL INTERESTED PARTNERS IN AIR MANAGEMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2:

BASED ON A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY (NES) AND ITS PRESENT IMPLEMENTATION, AN ACTION PLAN SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED THAT MEETS THE DECLARED POLICY NEEDS, INCLUDING ASSIGNING PRECISE RESPONSIBILITY AND PUTTING IN PLACE FINANCING SCHEMES. THE ACTION PLAN SHOULD BE FORMULATED IN COOPERATION WITH THE KEY PLAYERS, I.E. VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES, LINE MINISTRIES, INDUSTRY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AS WELL AS WITH DIFFERENT DECISION-MAKING LEVELS (LOCAL, REGIONAL AND CENTRAL).

The Law on the Protection of Ambient Air of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted by the Lithuanian Parliament on 4 November 1999. The requirements of this Law comply with requirements of Recommendation 6.1.

Not implemented yet. Elements are included in the National Transport Development Programme (existing since 1998), in which short-, medium- and long-term measures are foreseen, also in relation to air management. The Programme is, however, not yet approved. The suggested action plan will also have to take into account the recently adopted National Energy Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 6.3:

LITHUANIA SHOULD CONSIDER COMPLYING WITH THE PROTOCOLS ON SO_x, NO_x, VOCs, POPs AND HEAVY METALS TO THE CONVENTION OR LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION.

RECOMMENDATION 6.4:

NEW AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH EU PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED EMISSION STANDARDS SHOULD BE URGENTLY DEVELOPED, APPROVED AND ENFORCED.

RECOMMENDATION 6.5:

INCREASING THE USE OF NATURAL GAS IN THE NATIONAL ENERGY ECONOMY SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED. THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT SHOULD PREPARE AN ABATEMENT PROGRAMME FOR ALL STATIONARY SOURCES WITH TEMPORARY EMISSION LIMITS AND SET ESTABLISHED EMISSION LIMIT VALUES AS TARGETS.

Lithuania is a Member Party to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution since 1994. It signed the Protocols on POPs and Heavy Metals in Aarhus Conference in 1998. The main requirements of the Protocols are adhered to, but problems prevail with local and regional critical loads developments, as well as reductions of SO_x in certain enterprises.

The new Law on the Protection of Ambient Air transposes all the principal requirements of the air framework directive 96/62/EEC relating to air quality, and it provides the basis for issuing ministerial orders to transpose the daughter directives. The requirements of the IPPC Directive are implemented with assistance of the Danish Government.

A World Bank project 'Capacity Building in the Air Sector' is ongoing till the end of 2001. It will introduce internationally used air quality standards. PHARE assistance to air quality monitoring is available.

Changes in the use of natural gas are left to relative price developments. Support is given through the implementation of stricter standards, and the permitting system, which, for energy industries, favours the switch to natural gas when increasing capacity.

Temporary emission limits continue to be used, but in practice, they are rarely used for periods exceeding a few months. The requirements of the "Maximum allowable emission limit values (ELV) in the emitted gases by stationary combustion sources" (LAND 12-98) are in force since 1998.

RECOMMENDATION 6.6:

TRAFFIC MINIMIZATION THROUGH BETTER INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORT POLICY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WITH TERRITORIAL PLANNING AND PARTICULARLY LAND-USE PLANNING SHOULD BE PROMOTED IN THE MAIN CITIES, ESPECIALLY IN VILNIUS.

RECOMMENDATION 6.7:

THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL TAXATION SYSTEM SHOULD INCLUDE SUCH MARKET-ORIENTED INSTRUMENTS AS DIFFERENTIATED IMPORT DUTIES (LOWER FOR SAFER AND CLEANER VEHICLES), AND DIFFERENTIATED EXCISE DUTIES DEPENDING ON THE FUEL'S POLLUTION POTENTIAL.

RECOMMENDATION 6.8:

VEHICLE INSPECTION SHOULD BE BASED ON THE PRESENT STANDARDS (OUTCOME OF THE VIENNA REGIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT) AND RELY ON CERTIFIED AND ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED STATIONS AND GARAGES. IN ADDITION, SPOT CHECKS OF VEHICLES SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED AND BECOME CONTINUOUS AND BE EXTENDED TO TRANSPORT COMPANIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT VEHICLES.

Vilnius is the only municipality having established a master plan (since 1999), but other municipalities are working on it. The methodology for master plans was finished in 1998. It includes the requirement of the recommendation.

The document "Transport and Environment: the Lithuanian Comprehensive Strategy" was developed in 1999, with assistance from PHARE.

Vehicle taxes can be reduced for utilitarian vehicles for environmental friendliness. The same is true for pollution taxes. The ministry encourages the use of less polluting vehicles, but not at present in a systematic way.

The system of 1994 remains in force, but its implementation is improving. Since two years, the checking equipment of garages is improving. It is planned to implement the Vienna Agreement on Vehicle Inspection as of 2003. The practice of spot checks continues to be practised at unchanged levels.

RECOMMENDATION 6.9:

THE EXISTING FUEL QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEM SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED, INCLUDING STRICT BORDER CONTROL OF IMPORTED FUELS, AND CONTROLS ON THE TRANSPORT OF FUELS AND ON FILLING STATIONS.

The Ministry of Economy and the State Quality Inspectorate are responsible for the enforcement of fuel quality control. The Ministry of Economy issues licences for fuel marketing. Together with the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Economy sets fuel quality standards. The Customs Department and the State Quality Inspectorate are carrying out the fuel quality control. Further institutional strengthening is needed, but currently delayed because of pending reorganisation of the State Quality Inspectorate.

Chapter 7: Water resources management and water quality aspects

GENERAL TENDENCY

The transposition of the existing EU Directives into the national legal system is a clear priority task for water management in Lithuania. It will be followed by work on the transposition of the Framework Directive for Water, once this is adopted in the EU. Some preparatory work has been undertaken already. Lithuania welcomes the growing emphasis on river basin management, but substantial institutional difficulties are expected during implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 7.1:

THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION REQUIRED AFTER THE RECENT ADOPTION OF THE NEW WATER LAW SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR FUTURE WORK ON LEGAL INSTRUMENTS. THE INTRODUCTION OF INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUAL RIVER BASINS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED, INCLUDING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN LINE WITH THE NEW WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

RECOMMENDATION 7.2:

THE TOOL KIT OF WATER MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE EXTENDED PRIMARILY WITH ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS. APPROPRIATE TAXATION SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN PARTICULAR FOR WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 7.3:

THE FULL-FLEDGED INTRODUCTION OF A MODERN WATER USE POLICY REQUIRES STRONGER MUNICIPAL PROGRAMMES AND CAPABILITIES. THE ECONOMICS OF INDIVIDUAL WELL-FIELDS SHOULD BE REASSESSED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS IN WATER SUPPLY AND USE.

Lithuania approved the Comprehensive Programme of Approximation in 1999. The timetable for the elaboration of secondary legislation to the Water Law, and for the implementation of river basin management is included in the Programme.

The system of economic instruments for water management is defined in the Law on Taxes for Use of Natural Resources and the recent Law on Pollution Charges. The system is considered sufficient in scope, but modifications of tax rates will become necessary and possible at some stage. In 1998, the Commission on Regulation of Prices was established. It checks the calculation of proposed water prices prior to their approval by municipalities.

Amendments to the Law on Local Administration are being developed, aiming to increase the role of municipalities in the field of water management. A new unit responsible for management of water services was created in the Ministry of Local Government and Public Reforms. The economics of individual well fields are being assessed in the wider framework of responding to the sharp decrease in water use over the past decade.

RECOMMENDATION 7.4:

THE INTRODUCTION OF MODERN SLUDGE TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BECOME A PRIORITY FOR INVESTMENTS IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ESTABLISHING QUALITY STANDARDS FOR INDUSTRIAL WASTE-WATER MIGHT PROMOTE THE INTRODUCTION OF PRETREATMENT OF INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENT WATERS BEFORE THEY ENTER MUNICIPAL SEWAGE SYSTEMS.

RECOMMENDATION 7.5:

THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SHOULD SEEK INSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS AND SET UP ADEQUATE ROUTINES FOR COOPERATION TO MANAGE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN.

RECOMMENDATION 7.6:

EFFICIENT IMPROVEMENT IN WATER QUALITY ALONG THE BALTIC SEA COAST REQUIRES THE SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELEVANT HELCOM RECOMMENDATIONS AND OF THE EXISTING NATIONAL OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN.

The introduction of modern sludge treatment technology has become a priority, and such technologies have been included in recently built waste-water treatment plants. The amendment of existing waste-water pollution standards is foreseen as part of EU approximation and accession activities.

The Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture co-operate, among other things, in the reduction of diffused pollution from agriculture. Two projects are carried out aiming to implement EU Nitrates Directive. One of the projects aims to develop Code of Good Agricultural Practise. See also comment to Recommendation 12.1.

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was recently adopted, and the conditions for its swift implementation are met. All HELCOM recommendations regarding agricultural activities are being implemented, step by step. Implementation problems relate to some differences between requirements of the Nitrates Directive and HELCOM recommendations. Harmonisation is required, but is expected to occur before the adaptation period for the Nitrates Directive is over.

RECOMMENDATION 7.7:

EXISTING MONITORING SHOULD BE IMPROVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH HELCOM PRACTICES, AS SHOULD THE QUALITY OF MONITORING DATA AND OF OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DATA. THEIR ACCESSIBILITY AND THEIR ACTUAL USE IN ANALYSIS SHOULD BE IMPROVED BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS.

The New Environmental Monitoring Programme is generally in accordance with HELCOM practices, but some differences remain. A twinning project in the area of water monitoring is on its way with Denmark. The Information Management Division of the Ministry of Environment, established in 1999, is responsible for improving the collection, processing, dissemination and use of environmental data. See also the comment to Recommendation 1.5.

Chapter 8: Nature management

GENERAL TENDENCY

A high priority for nature management is the revision of the Law on Protected Areas from 1993. The revision is prompted by a need to simplify its provisions, and by improving the internal consistency of the environmental legal system overall. The repercussions of the land reform for nature protection are of great importance in this connection. A second major preoccupation resides in the transposition of the EU Habitat and Birds Directives, and in their implementation. Compared to progress achieved in these priority areas, developments in actual protected area management (i.e. establishment of management plans in all areas, creation of advisory boards) advance slowly, together with the resulting changes in coordination of such management with all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 8.1:

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL PROTECTED AREAS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT HAS STARTED. THE NECESSARY COOPERATION WITH OTHER MINISTRIES IN MANAGING PROTECTED AREAS SHOULD BE ASSURED BY WAY OF SPECIAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THEM, PAVING THE WAY FOR A FULLER INTEGRATION OF NATURE MANAGEMENT ISSUES INTO SECTORAL POLICIES.

RECOMMENDATION 8.2:

MANAGEMENT PLANS SHOULD BE DRAWN UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR EACH PROTECTED AREA AS THE BASIS FOR ITS MANAGEMENT.

The Forest and Protected Areas Department was established in 1998, after the reorganisation of the Ministry of Environmental Protection into the Ministry of Environment. Following this reorganisation, the responsibilities of management of protected areas of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry were merged. At present, almost all Protected Areas in Lithuania belong to the Forest and Protected Areas Department. Among them there are all 4 Strict Nature Reserves, 4 (of 5) National Parks and 27 (of 30) Regional Parks. The Ministry of Culture continues to manage cultural heritage. The promotion of municipal protected areas may lead to increased nature management under their authority.

The development of management plans is slowly progressing. At present, about 50 per cent of the total of national and regional parks have such plans. The intention is to develop them for all protected areas.

RECOMMENDATION 8.3:

STRENGTHENING JOINT PARK COUNCILS OR SYSTEMATICALLY CREATING PARK ADVISORY BOARDS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. IT WOULD ALSO BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ASSOCIATING-IF NOT INTEGRATING-NGOs AND OTHER LOCAL INTERESTS INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF STATE PARKS. THEIR MANAGEMENT SHOULD ALSO BE STRENGTHENED THROUGH TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

RECOMMENDATION 8.4:

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH NEEDS TO BE TAKEN TO THE COMPILATION, ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION OF DATA ON NATURE CONSERVATION, SPECIFIC SPECIES AND HABITATS. THE APPROACH SHOULD INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR BRIDGING IMPORTANT DATA GAPS.

RECOMMENDATION 8.5:

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, I.E. LAND-USE AND SECTORAL PLANNING INTEGRATED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE PLANNING, SHOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO LITHUANIA'S LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE.

Advisory Boards exist now in all national and regional parks. Training is extended to staff of the parks. Events organized in the parks often can also be seen as training exercises, open to the public.

The approach to the problems referred to by this recommendation are being met in the accession activities. The project "Approximation of Lithuanian capacity, policies and procedures on nature protection to EU requirements" has commenced in autumn 1999. Experts of the working group related to habitats, sites and plant species under the project reported on the distribution, status and core areas for habitats in June, 2000.

Major concrete actions include:

- Creation of the unified classification of Lithuanian habitats
- Preparation of an overview comparing national classification systems with the EU Palearctic habitat classification system
- Identification of NATURA 2000 areas in accordance with national and EU criteria
- Verification of plant species which are supposed to be extinct or poorly documented in Lithuania
- Compilation of a list of species covered by the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, noting whether they receive national protective measures or not.

The next hard copy edition of the Red Data Book is planned to be published in 2001.

Current pilot projects are being implemented with Finnish assistance. The inclusion of strategic environmental assessment in the legal system is foreseen on the basis of the results from the projects.

RECOMMENDATION 8.6:

A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AT LOCAL LEVEL. IT SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF NATURE CONSERVATION ON THE ONE HAND AND ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS ON THE OTHER. LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR THE PROGRAMME. ITS IMPLEMENTATION SHOULD INVOLVE THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE PROGRAMME SHOULD SPECIFY ADEQUATE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES.

The National tourism development programme of 1998 was followed by an action plan, in April 2000. The plan includes some 40 projects, of which about 16 are at regional and local level. Financing mechanisms are not included, but this will be done at the next revision of the plan in 2002. Local authorities established 16 tourist information centres. Eco-tourism is more and more developed, particularly in national parks and other protected areas of the country. All tourism companies are private in Lithuania. The Culture tourism development programme (1998) and the Rural tourism development programme (1998) were also approved.

Chapter 9: Waste management

GENERAL TENDENCY

The transposition of EU legislation, and the need to respond to the heavy requirements for changing waste management in the transition period generate extraordinary work loads for the Ministry in this area. At present, the preparation of the landfill regulation and related documents, as well as the writing of the strategic waste management plans are the main priorities. At the same time, the implementation of the new legal instruments needs to be started. There will be a shift of responsibilities to a large extent to local administrations, reserving the capacities of the Ministry primarily for the preparation of laws and other legal instruments for the country as a whole. The entire process of change is assisted by external cooperation, particularly with Denmark.

RECOMMENDATION 9.1:

THE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY SHOULD BE APPROVED AS A MATTER OF THE GREATEST POSSIBLE URGENCY, AND ON THE BASIS OF A CONSENSUS BY ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED. FEASIBILITY STUDIES OF WASTE TREATMENT PROJECTS SHOULD REGULARLY INCLUDE A TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF THE TECHNICAL POSSIBILITIES EXISTING IN THE COUNTRY. MANAGEMENT PLANS NEED TO BE PART OF THE PREPARATION OF WASTE TREATMENT FACILITIES.

RECOMMENDATION 9.2:

THE SCATTERED REGULATIONS THAT ARE IN FORCE SHOULD BE REPLACED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BY A COHERENT SET OF REGULATIONS COMPATIBLE WITH THE AIMS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT LAW.

The general vision of the National Waste Management Strategy and Action Programme was approved by Government in May 1999, after its coordination with all institutions concerned on all levels of administration. The actual strategy will be derived from this vision until the end of 2001.

The Ministry of Environment required to undertake an evaluation of Lithuania's technical and economic possibilities of waste treatment projects as a condition before feasibility studies (Order of the MoE No 217 of 14 07 1999).

Management plans of new waste treatment plants are a necessary part of their feasibility studies.

The existing procedures, regulations, waste classificatory and other documents that contradict the approved Regulations of Waste Management, are gradually being invalidated. The revision of the Law on Waste Management (in 2000) will eliminate much of the remaining inconsistencies.

The draft legal acts regulating landfills, packaging waste and waste import and export in full compliance with the EU are under preparation at present. For landfills and import/export, the work will be finished this year, and the existing draft of the law on packaging wastes may lead to the necessary adaptations in 2002, including the adoption of the necessary by-laws.

RECOMMENDATION 9.3:

A STRATEGY FOR RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT, OR AT LEAST A TIMETABLE FOR STRATEGIC DECISIONS, IS REQUIRED AS PART OF AN OVERALL WASTE AND ENERGY STRATEGY.

RECOMMENDATION 9.4:

THE REUSE OF CONSTRUCTION AND QUARRY WASTES SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED BY CHARGING THE FULL COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL COSTS TO THE HOLDERS OF THESE WASTES.

RECOMMENDATION 9.5:

A LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK NEEDS TO BE ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE CONTAMINATED WASTE DISPOSAL SITES, SET CRITERIA FOR ACTION, AND FINANCE REMEDIAL ACTION, AS WELL AS TO SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS RELATED TO USED OILS. AN EFFICIENT REPORTING AND CONTROL SYSTEM FOR HAZARDOUS WASTES NEEDS TO BE SET UP AND IMPLEMENTED.

The National Strategy of Energy, adopted by Parliament on 5 October 1999, foresees to improve the radioactive waste management. According to the Law on Radioactive Waste Management, the establishment of the Radioactive Waste Management Agency is foreseen. Ignalina NPP started projects on improvement of radioactive waste segregation, handling, conditioning procedures as well as on minimisation of waste.

The "polluter pays principle" for all kind of waste is foreseen in the Law of Waste Management, including for construction and quarrying wastes. Full costing is expected to be reached in 2004.

The legal acts and recommendations (8 handbooks) regulating the management of landfills will be finished and approved in 2000. They foresee financial actions and economic instruments for the management of waste disposal sites. See also the comment on Recommendation 9.2.

The management of used oil is included in the Regulations of Waste Management as a component of hazardous wastes. The special requirements of the Directive 75/439/EEC will be transposed into the Lithuanian legislation by the end of 2001.

PART III: ECONOMIC AND SECTORAL INTEGRATION

Chapter 10: Human health and the environment

GENERAL TENDENCY

The work on environment and health management is characterized by steady progress in all areas, for which recommendations had been made. The pace of progress is, however, hampered by the absence of sufficient funding mechanisms, and also by ongoing institutional instabilities, impeding coordination and cooperation between different administrations. The adoption of the current draft of the National Environmental Health Action Plan will concentrate the future work in this area on NEHAP implementation. Improvements are expected in many areas from this phase. An acceleration of the introduction of the National Environmental Health Information System with additional funds would be of particular assistance to NEHAP implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 10.1:

THE EFFECTS OF TRAFFIC ON HUMAN HEALTH SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AS A PRIORITY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONCERN. THE ENFORCEMENT OF CONTROLS ON VEHICLE EXHAUST AND NOISE EMISSIONS AND OF MEASURES TO PREVENT THE REGISTRATION AND CIRCULATION OF NOISIER OR MORE POLLUTING VEHICLES SHOULD BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY. TRAFFIC IN CITY CENTRES SHOULD BE REDUCED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT USING LESS POLLUTING AND LESS NOISY VEHICLES/FUELS, CYCLING AND WALKING SHOULD BE PROMOTED. TRAFFIC ACCIDENT PREVENTION SHOULD RECEIVE MORE ATTENTION FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR. IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUE AND MANAGED IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER MINISTRIES (I.E. TRANSPORT, SOCIAL WELFARE AND LABOUR, AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS).

RECOMMENDATION 10.2:

THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STRATEGY TO PREVENT MICROBIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION OF WELL WATER AND EXTEND THE CENTRALIZED ARTESIAN WELL DRINKING-WATER SUPPLY.

The Road Safety Commission was established by Order of the Minister of Transport (February, 1999). The Commission is intersectoral, including the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Health Care, the Ministry of Public Administration Reforms and Local Authorities, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, and others.

Controls of vehicle exhaust and noise emissions and of measures to prevent the registration and circulation of noisier or more polluting vehicles are foreseen in the Government Resolution of March 1999 on the establishment of a state register of all transport means and self-propelled agriculture vehicles.

A National Programme on Trauma Prevention was elaborated by an intersectoral working group of representatives of different ministries. It includes traffic aspects. The Ministry of Health played the leading role. The National Programme on Road Traffic Safety for 2000 - 2005 is under preparation. A chapter on trauma aspects is included in the draft National Environmental Health Action Plan.

The process for the implementation of the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health has started.

Requirements for preventing microbiological contamination of well water are clarified in Hygiene Regulation 44-2000 on design and supervision of sanitary protection zones, and in Hygiene Regulation 24-1998 on drinking water quality and monitoring. The extension of centralized artesian well drinking-water supply is included in the draft NEHAP.

RECOMMENDATION 10.3:

THE SYSTEM OF FOOD MONITORING AND CONTROL SHOULD BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY INTRODUCING HAZARD ANALYSIS CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS (HACCP).

RECOMMENDATION 10.4:

STRATEGIES TO MONITOR AND ASSESS INDOOR AIR QUALITY, INCLUDING LEVELS AND EXPOSURE TO NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO₂), SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED TO BETTER ASSESS HEALTH RISKS. GROUND-LEVEL OZONE SHOULD BE MONITORED TO REFINE CURRENT EXPOSURE ASSESSMENTS.

RECOMMENDATION 10.5:

THERE IS A NEED TO IDENTIFY AREAS AND DWELLINGS WITH HIGH INDOOR RADON CONCENTRATION AND TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO REDUCE HUMAN EXPOSURE TO RADON WHERE THIS EXCEEDS CRITICAL THRESHOLDS.

A Law on Food Control was adopted in 2000. Hygiene Regulation 54-1998 on maximum permitted levels of chemical contaminants and radionuclides in raw materials and foodstuffs, and Hygiene Regulation 15-1998 on Food Hygiene introduce Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, entering into force on 1 July 2000.

Strategies for indoor air quality assessment that are considered satisfactory are included in the draft NEHAP. Ground-level ozone monitoring is included in the new National Environmental Monitoring Programme: background air monitoring (ozone-every hour), and urban air monitoring (ozone-in automated stations). See also comment on Recommendation 1.5.

Indoor radon measurements in more than 500 randomly selected detached houses and houses in the karst region have been performed. Areas of high indoor radon risk were identified, the necessary standards (Hygiene Regulation 84-1998) dealing with natural exposure, including due to indoor radon, have been prepared and adopted, and recommendations for remedial and prevention measures have been published. Investigations of regions with high indoor radon risk are being continued by the Radiation Protection Centre, with support of the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute.

RECOMMENDATION 10.6:

WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES OF THE CENTRES WITHIN THE STATE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE SHOULD BE BETTER CLARIFIED (E.G. THE ROLE OF THE HYGIENE INSPECTORATE, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING OF NOISE AND OF INDOOR AIR). BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT COORDINATION AND AGREEMENT ON COMMON OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES SHOULD BE IMPROVED, USING THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN AS A TOOL, WHICH SHOULD TAKE THE WORK DONE ON THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROGRAMME (NEAP) INTO ACCOUNT.

RECOMMENDATION 10.7:

THERE IS A NEED TO FURTHER DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM BUILDING ON THE WORK ALREADY DONE, AND TO FURTHER EXPAND CURRENT WORK ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON NEW ECONOMIC INITIATIVES.

Responsibilities, competences, coordination and management of public health surveillance institutions were reorganized by the Order of the Minister of Health of November 1999 on the State Public Health Service. A further major reorganization is pending.

According to the joint Order of the Ministers of Health and of Environment on the Elaboration of a National Environmental Health Action Plan (No 480/156 of 21 August 1998), 13 intersectoral working groups were established. The draft NEHAP is under discussion now with other interested ministries, NGOs, universities, Governmental and Parliamentary Committees and Commissions.

The strategy for implementation of the system aims at the local level, for which a big investment programme has been jointly adopted by the Ministers of Health and of Economy, implementing it step by step. It establishes computerised networks for use in public health (environmental health) indicators analysis. The strategy as well as the pace of realization of the programme are determined by the scarcity of funds.

Chapter 11: Environmental concerns in energy

GENERAL TENDENCY

The accession to the EU is being given great prominence in the management of this area. Most problematic are all questions related to waste substances. Other preoccupations of both energy and environmental managers are focused on the consequences of the closure of the Ignalina NPP. Fully satisfactory cooperation and coordination routines do not yet seem to be in place between the Ministry of Environment and the institutions responsible for energy management. It can be expected that energy conservation will develop into a major preoccupation for both energy supply and environmental protection management.

RECOMMENDATION 11.1:

A FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK IS REQUIRED TO HELP INDUSTRIES IN THEIR DRIVE TOWARD INCREASED ENERGY EFFICIENCY. A PROGRAMME TO REDUCE ENERGY USE IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY, AND EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO REACH THE SAME GOAL IN PRIVATE BUILDINGS THROUGH EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS. FUELS SHOULD BE PRICED SO AS TO STIMULATE MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT TRANSPORT. MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT MORE ATTRACTIVE.

The Law on Energy Saving is currently being prepared. It will give rise to an energy conservation programme, which is also under preparation. Measures to promote the increase of the efficiency of energy use in industrial enterprises are foreseen as well. The Housing and Urban Development Foundation coordinates work on the reduction of energy use in public (so far schools) and residential buildings, implementing a World Bank project (see comment on Recommendation 4.5). A municipal development programme is under preparation for IFI support. Its implementation would improve energy use in buildings, too.

Substantial attention is being paid to the educational activities. Articles on energy saving and house keeping issues, proposals and recommendations for energy saving in public buildings (hospitals and schools) related to reconstruction of the heating systems, conclusions of monitoring which is being carried out in renovated houses are widely published. During relevant exhibitions, consultations were provided on issues relating to building renovation, maintenance, credits available for the related works. Exhibitions are being organised once or twice a year in the biggest cities – Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai.

The renovation of the vehicle fleet is considered the most important variable for the increase of energy use in transport. Prices play a large role in the renovation process, which is on its way and dynamic. Economic instruments are applied to favour environmentally friendlier fuels.

Public transport is in the authority of municipal administrations. The Ministry of Transport assists indirectly in promoting municipal strengthening of public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 11.2:

THE CURRENT NATIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY SHOULD GIVE APPROPRIATE ATTENTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS CONNECTED WITH THE OPERATION OF THE IGNALINA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN ALL ITS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS.

RECOMMENDATION 11.3:

A WIDE-RANGING R&D PROGRAMME IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS. SUCH A PROGRAMME SHOULD BE DRAWN UP JOINTLY BY THE MINISTRIES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND OF THE ECONOMY AND SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY MEASURES THAT INCREASE THE MANAGERIAL CAPACITY OF INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT. HIGH PRIORITY IN R&D PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO SOLVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE BURNING OF BITUMEN EMULSIONS FOR ENERGY PURPOSES.

RECOMMENDATION 11.4:

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FUND SHOULD FINANCE PROJECTS AIMING AT INCREASING THE USE OF DOMESTIC RESOURCES, AS WELL AS SELECTED ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECTS. REALISTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND USED TO LABEL CONSUMER APPLIANCES AND EQUIPMENT ACCORDING TO THEIR ENERGY EFFICIENCY.

The National Energy Strategy (NES) was approved by the decision of Parliament on 5 October 1999 (No. VIII-1348). It takes the essential requirements and guidelines of the European Association Treaty, the Energy Charter Treaty and other international agreements in the field of energy into account, as well as the principles of the energy policy of the European Union and its Member States. One of the main priorities in the National Energy Strategy is the reduction of the negative impact of the energy sector on the environment, including nuclear safety requirements. Lithuania will implement entirely all recommendations of the Safety Analysis Report, its independent review (RSR), as well as of the International Ignalina NPP Safety Panel.

A specific programme does not exist. Actions are spread over various instruments. R&D as well as public education are foreseen in the NES Implementation Plan that is under preparation now. A National Energy Efficiency Programme is being implemented currently. The Ministry of Economy prepares a programme for development of industry, which pays some attention to industrial energy efficiency.

A test regarding the combustion possibilities for bitumen emulsion led to burning 124 thousand tonnes of bitumen emulsion in the "Lithuanian Power Plant" in Elektrenai. It permitted to assess environmental effects from such burning. At present, a larger test is prepared through corresponding investments in the plant equipment. The conclusions from the tests will be drawn by Government.

Following the provisions of the Energy Law of 1995, the Energy Saving Fund was established and starts to work. The financial resources of the Fund are meant for financing measures saving energy and using it efficiently, and for implementing, maintaining and developing measures for an increased use of domestic renewable and secondary energy resources. Current resources of the fund are low, but efforts are being made to increase them.

The accession to the EU will imply the transposition of all 16 directives dealing with energy efficiency (planned by 2003), including the labelling directive. At present, the standards and other normative documents for the labelling of household devices are being specified.

RECOMMENDATION 11.5:

THE ELECTRICITY EFFICIENCY OF COMBINED HEAT AND POWER PLANTS SHOULD BE IMPROVED, ALSO IN ANTICIPATION OF THE PHASING-OUT OF THE IGNALINA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT. A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN THE LOSSES IN THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY AND DISTRICT HEAT SHOULD HELP TO MAKE DISTRICT HEATING COMPETITIVE COMPARED WITH DECENTRALIZED OIL AND GAS BOILERS.

RECOMMENDATION 11.6:

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A ROBUST AND DIVERSIFIED STRUCTURE OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY REQUIRES THE SETTING-UP OF AN INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR SMALL INDEPENDENT POWER PRODUCERS.

RECOMMENDATION 11.7:

THE CONNECTION OF THE LITHUANIAN POWER SYSTEM TO THE WEST EUROPEAN POWER GRID SHOULD GO AHEAD AS PLANNED, SUBJECT TO ANY ARRANGEMENTS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY REGARDING ELECTRICITY EXPORT. CONNECTION TO THE BALTIC GAS RING SHOULD BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

The reduction of the losses in power generation and distribution are included in the respective action plans of specific enterprises. Regarding heat, the Heat Law will be submitted to Parliament for adoption in 2000. A strategy for municipality actions regarding heating systems is to be defined after approval of the law.

There are few small independent power producers in Lithuania. Most of them are hydro, wind or gas power plants. The Government promotes their activities. Their excess power is bought by the State at average consumer prices.

The National Energy Strategy determines the following strategic energy goals:

- reliable and safe energy supply at least cost
- preparation of Lithuania's energy sector for integration into the European Union
- regional co-ordination and co-operation.

The three Baltic States have started negotiations on the creation of a common electricity market. A working group was established. The discussions will take environmental considerations into account.

The technical issues of the connection to the Polish electricity transmission grid are presently being solved in cooperation with Poland. The connection will help to integrate Lithuania into the European grid, for purposes of both export and import.

In June 1999, the JSC "Lietuvos dujos" ("Lithuanian Gas") joined the Association of companies "Baltic Gas", which maintain the main gas pipelines in the Baltic region. By initiative of this Association and with EU financing support, it is planned to prepare the Study on linking the gas networks of Denmark, Poland and Lithuania. At this time, the contacts are at company level.

Chapter 12: Environmental concerns in agriculture and food processing

GENERAL TENDENCY

The incorporation of environmental concerns into agricultural policies seems to benefit greatly from an active unit for environmentally friendly agriculture in the Ministry of Agriculture. The satisfactory development of related policies and programmes can probably be largely attributed to this institutional solution. Particularly noteworthy is the progress achieved in organic farming. Substantial developments are also under way with regard to the development of a Code for Good Agricultural practices, as well as to a wider environmental programme for agriculture. The progress at ministerial level is matched by substantial training that is extended to farmers.

The EU accession puts great demands on the agricultural administrations, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture. Despite this workload improvement of environmental performance in agriculture should continue.

RECOMMENDATION 12.1:

A NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND APPROVED. ITS EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES. THE POLICY SHOULD PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF NITRATE AND PESTICIDE CONCENTRATIONS IN GROUNDWATER THAT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.

The national environmental policy for the agricultural sector is composed of a number of provisions in different legal documents, such as the national environmental protection strategy, the biodiversity conservation strategy, the Law on State Regulations of Economic Relations in Agriculture, or the Programme of the Rural Support Fund. The Strategy on Agriculture, approved in June 2000, includes small references to organic farming and agro-environmental issues. The implementation of this policy is facilitated by effective cooperation between the Ministries of Environment and of Agriculture, which benefits from the existence of a coordination unit in the Ministry of Agriculture.

The main objectives of the national environmental policy for agriculture are sustainable development of agriculture, conservation of biodiversity, application of agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of environmental protection, primarily of underground and surface waters. Current programmes include promotion of organic farming with economic instruments, development of a Code of Good Agricultural Practices, and preparation of an agro-environmental programme.

Since this year, organic farms are certified according to the organic farming rules adopted in 1999, which are in full agreement with EU Regulation 2092/91 and its amendments. The rules were developed with the help of Swedish experts, and the Swedish certification organisation KRAV recognised the Lithuanian organic farming certification system.

Groundwater monitoring is in the responsibilities of the Geological Survey. While present levels of nitrate concentrations in water remain within European limits, unfavourable trends exist locally. As a response, vulnerable zones are being designated on the basis of monitoring data, for which a nitrate management programme will be elaborated once the designation is finished. In general, the future Lithuanian practices will focus on the implementation of the EU nitrates directive. See also comment on Recommendation 7.6.

RECOMMENDATION 12.2:

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE FURTHER DEVELOPED. ITS WIDER APPLICATION IS JUSTIFIED BY THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF AGRICULTURE. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON A LARGER SCALE REQUIRES THE RESPECTIVE QUALIFICATIONS TO BE AVAILABLE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 12.3:

TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR FARMERS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE ADVISORY SERVICE, TOGETHER WITH THE CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF FARMERS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES.

The revision of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment of April 2000 transposes the related EU Directive of 1997. Assessments of farms have not occurred in practice. If a case arises, the EIA Division of the Ministry of Environment would be in a position to hire outside expertise for the case.

The relevant Lithuanian advisory, research and training system consists of 10 educational institutions and agricultural research institutes, 53 higher agricultural and agricultural schools, the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service with 44 branches, the Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture, etc. Training activities of the institutions are closely related with environmental issues. They are as follows:

- The Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service is involved into two environmental projects: the programme on reducing pollution in the Baltic Sea and the programme on dispersion of pollution in Lielupe river. 10 seminars on each project are planned. The consultants of the Service are continually organising courses and seminars on various environmental topics, such as sustainable agriculture, balanced use of pesticides and fertilisers, etc. Methodical information is being published on the mentioned subjects.
- The Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture specialises on farmer training and consulting in non-traditional agricultural activities. One subject is organic agriculture. The Chamber has organised more than 20 seminars and 10 fairs of organic products.
- The institutions of research and studies apply research results to environmental problems. They lead to programmes, projects, demonstration examples, and recommendations. The institutions also participate in the process of farmer training and consultation.
- Almost all institutions of agricultural research and education include issues on environment in their training programme. The Lithuanian Agricultural University runs a separate bachelor programme on ecology.

RECOMMENDATION 12.4:

THE AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR JOINT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN BY ALL FEASIBLE MEANS.

RECOMMENDATION 12.5:

THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER MINISTRIES CONCERNED, SHOULD PROMOTE NEW AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGIES AND SOLVE ANY EXISTING WASTE PROBLEMS FROM FOOD-PROCESSING, IN COOPERATION WITH THE FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY. SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION 3.4.

RECOMMENDATION 12.6:

A COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEM THAT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IS PREPARING.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment closely co-operate with each other in solving environmental problems in agriculture. Special working groups are formed to make proposals for preparation of legal acts in water protection and agricultural management measures. At present, two such groups work on the transposition of the EU Nitrates Directive and the agro-environmental programme, respectively.

The Rural Support Fund is available for assistance to the financing of manure storage and slurry reservoirs. The Fund was created in 1997. The Ministry of Agriculture is authorized to determine priorities for the use of the Fund's resources.

The problem is expected to be solved in the EU accession process.
