Technical report No 36

Reporting frequencies of state-of-the-environment reports in Europe

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The study was finalised in September 1997, country comments were included up to January 1998. Recently a more complete and regularly updated inventory of National State-of-the-environment-reports has become available at the EEA homepage: http://www.eea.eu.int; look for SERIS (State of the Environment Reporting Information System).

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It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int)

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1. Introduction

Recent years have seen a major growth in both the demand for, and production of, environmental information. The growing demand derives from a number of related sources:

- increasing environmental awareness by the public and other stakeholders;
- an increasing demand for public access to environmental information, as recognised by Directive 90/313/EEC;
- increasing needs for accountability in environmental policy and management;
- increasing need for collaboration and communication between decision-makers in different organisations, in different areas of specialisms, and in different regions and countries in order to tackle the complex, multi-media, multi-sectoral and cross-boundary problems of the environment.

At the same time, the capability to provide environmental information has been enhanced by a number of developments, including:

- improved collaboration between the agencies responsible for environmental monitoring (e.g. through the establishment of international monitoring networks and adoption of international data standards);
- improvements in technologies for environmental monitoring and surveillance (e.g. by remote sensing and automated monitoring techniques);
- improvements in environmental modelling;
- advances in environmental mapping (e.g. through the use of GIS);

As a result of these various developments, the number and range of reports on the state of the environment have burgeoned over the last 5-10 years. Today, every European country produces national reports, at least on an irregular basis. Many international organisations also produce reports, either under international conventions or as part of their remit to promote environmental understanding and collaboration. These reports take many forms: they range from detailed statistical digests and compendia (often supported by only a brief explanatory commentary), through more interpretative 'state of environment reports', through to policy reviews and annual reports of progress. Increasingly, they are also produced through a wide range of media: as traditional published reports, as collections of maps or information sheets, on diskette or CD-ROM, or as Internet pages.

Together, these various reports clearly provide a rich and valuable information source. They not only help to inform the public, but can also feed into policy and strategic management at different levels of decision-making, and can be an important data source for research. They are potentially useful not only to their immediate target audience, but also to a wide range of other users. Amongst their most important potential use is as an information source for European policy, and for comparative analyses at the international level.

Nevertheless, the very proliferation and diversity of reports also creates problems. Differences in information content, data definitions, reporting form and reporting frequency all make it difficult for users to bring together information from the various reports, or to make comparisons between different reports. The wide range of reporting agencies, and lack of formal linkages between many of the organisations concerned, also makes it difficult for users to access reports.
It is likely, therefore, that considerable added value might be given to these reports by:

- wider dissemination of information about the availability and content of the various reports;
- efforts to make the reports more comparable and/or to improve cross-referencing between the various reports.

In both these respects, the European Environment Agency has an important role to play, as part of its responsibility to enhance the dissemination and use of environmental information within the European Union. The SERIS system on the Internet (http://www.eea.eu.int) gives an overview of available national State-of-the-environment-reports in Europe. This study investigates one of the most important attributes of state of environment reports in Europe – their reporting frequency. It:

- collates and summarises information on the availability of state of environment reports according to type (Section 2);
- describes reporting frequencies of existing reports (Section 3);
- presents a brief commentary on the trends/developments in reporting strategies (Section 4); and
- briefly assesses the implications for, and possibilities of, harmonisation or cross-referencing of the reports (Section 5).

The study has been carried out through four main processes:

- detailed searches of Internet for preliminary information on reporting agencies;
- a literature review, mainly of compilations on state of environment reporting[1].
- contact with National Focal Points of the EEA and the EEA/PHARE project;
- follow-up contact (by letter, telephone, FAX, Email) with the reporting agencies.

In accordance with the interests of the EEA, the study focuses on:

- national reports produced by the fifteen member states of the EU (EU15);
- other Scandinavian, CIS and CEE states (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Bulgaria, Czech republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia);

[1] E.g. Denisov, N.B., Mnatsakanian, R.A. and Semichaevsky, A.V. 1997 *Environmental reporting in central and eastern Europe: an overview of publications and frameworks.* Central European University and UNEP; WRI 1996, *World directory of country environmental studies.* World Resources Insitute, Washington.

- international organisations and conventions covering the European region

Wherever possible, copies of the relevant reports were obtained and inspected. Unfortunately, within the constraints of this short study, this was not always possible, so description and classification of some reports have had to be based either on the brief summaries provided by the agencies concerned, or on the basis of the title alone. In several cases, also, reporting strategies are either still in the process of being developed or are under review. The information provided in this report must therefore be considered only as indicative.

2. Types of report

As noted earlier, a wide range of reports providing information on the state of the environment are now produced at national and international level. There is no obvious or established typology by which to describe these various reports: they merely represent specific attempts to meet the perceived need for information, by specific organisations and on the basis of available data.

In principle, the term 'state of environment report' should perhaps be restricted to those reports which present information on a relatively wide panoply of environmental conditions. Even within this definition, there is considerable diversity. Whilst many reports focus on the relatively static 'state' of the various environmental media (air, water, soil etc), they may also consider trends in these conditions. Many such reports also consider levels of activity and trends in the various socio-economic sectors which affect the environment. Increasingly, reports are being based upon a defined set of environmental indicators (and are often referred to as 'indicator reports'). Increasingly, also, reports are being broadened or adapted to cover issues of 'sustainable development' rather than the environment *per se*. Many also consider the policy actions taken by government in response to the perceived environmental problems, and which often act as driving forces for environmental change. In part reflecting these different approaches, the reports may also vary in terms of their degree of quantitativeness – i.e. the extent to which they present hard data or statistics, as opposed to a descriptive or interpretative commentary. Generic state-of-the-environment-reports thus vary substantially, for example in terms of:

- the range of environmental issues, environmental media and sectors which they cover;
- their geographic coverage and scale;
- their degree of 'data-dependency' (i.e. how much 'hard' data they provide, as opposed to more qualitative information and discussion);
- their publication format;
- their frequency and regularity of publication.

In addition, many organisations publish more narrow, thematic reports – focusing, for example, on specific media, sectors or areas. Whilst these might not represent 'state of environment reports' in their strictest sense, they nevertheless provide an important source of environmental information. Several such reports, covering different media or sectors, can also provide a wider overview on the environment, thereby collectively constituting a 'state of the environment report'. Indeed, in some countries (e.g. Germany) thematic reports of this type are now being published as a series of linked volumes.

Defining the term 'state of environment report' in a way which is both clear and practicable therefore presents significant challenges. An attempt to develop a typology was made by the World Resources Institute (WRI, 1996, see footnote on page 5). This recognised 11 categories of environmental report:

- Agenda 21 reports
- biodiversity assessments, strategies and action plans
- climate change assessments, strategies and action plans

- environmental profiles
- environmental strategies and action plans
- environmental synopses
- forestry assessments, strategies and action plans
- environmental performance reviews
- state of environment reports
- UNCED national reports
- other environmental studies

Within this framework, state of environment reports were described as follows:

'Reports on the state of the environment present information on the conditions and trends of the environment; identify and analyze causes, linkages and constraints; and indicate emerging issues and problems and their relevance to policies. Most state-of-the environment (SOE) reports are prepared by national governments for national policymakers and the public. However, some reports are prepared by intergovernmental organizations, and, in a few cases, by non-governmental organizations.'

The categories recognised by WRI are of limited value for this study in that they do not take clear account of the format of the reports and are somewhat unsystematic in that they include separate categories for some (but not all) of the themes they might cover (i.e. biodiversity, climate change, forestry but not water resources, air pollution or wastes for example).

For the sake of this report, therefore, a new typology was defined and applied, as follows:

R environmental reports – 'state of environment reports' in their commonly-used sense; i.e. reports which contain a more-or-less balanced mixture of explanatory/discursive text and hard data (e.g. tables, graphs, maps) covering a wide spectrum of environmental media and, perhaps, sectors.

I indicator reports – i.e. largely data-based reports, which present information for specific indicators, normally accompanied by brief descriptive or explanatory commentaries, covering a wide range of environmental issues.

S statistical compendia – i.e. databases, inventories, or data sets supported by little or no explanatory commentary, other than comments on data definitions, sources etc, which cover a wide range of environmental media and/or sectors of activity.

T thematic reports – i.e. reports focused upon a specific theme, medium or sector, or small set of these.

O other reports – i.e. reports not fitting into any of the above categories (e.g. policy reports, special studies, performance reviews, annual agency reports).

U unpublished reports and data collations.

Annexes 1 -3 list the reports identified as part of this study, classified according to the R-I-S-T-O-U typology outlined above. It should be noted that these lists are unlikely to be entirely comprehensive, for a number of reasons:

- some reports may have been missed during the search
- information provided by contact organisations may not always be wholly accurate or up-to-date
- new reports appear at intervals, and some cease publication
- the format and publication arrangements tend to vary over time

Table 1 summarises national reports on the basis of this typology. Table 2 summarises international reports on the basis of the same typology. These tables exclude one-off reports, which are unlikely to be repeated; as such, the national reports prepared specifically to UNCED have not been included. Also excluded are reports for which insufficient information could be obtained to indicate either the character of the report, or the reporting frequency. In addition, the national tables do not include reports produced by non-governmental agencies, such as pressure groups, charities or independent authors.

3. Reporting frequencies

3.1. Environmental reports

As Tables 1 and 2 indicate, most countries included in this survey produce national environmental reports (i.e. 'state of environment reports' in their narrow sense).

Table 1. Frequency of reporting: national reports by type, January 1998

Country	R Environ-mental reports	I Indicators reports	S Statistical compendia	T Thematic reports	O Other
Austria	2/3			1	
Belgium (Flanders)	2 (5*)	0 (1*)	0		
Belgium (Walloon)	1/2 (5*)	(1*)	0		
Bulgaria	2				
Croatia	2				
Czech Republic	1		1	1	
Denmark	4	1	4	1	4
Estonia	1	1		1	irreg
Finland	1/4		irreg.		
France	4	irreg	1	irreg	
Germany	2		1	varied	varied
Greece	irreg		1/2	1	varied
Hungary	4*	1	2	2*	
Iceland	4-5*				1
Ireland	5		irreg		
Italy	2	irreg	2		
Latvia	irreg		1		irreg
Liechtenstein	5*				
Lithuania*	irreg				irreg
Luxembourg	5		1		
Netherlands	1		1		3/4
Norway	1		1	varied	
Poland	irreg		1		
Portugal	1 (4-5*)	1*			
Romania					irregular
Slovak Republic	1			1	
Slovenia	1			1	
Spain	1	1♣		1	
Sweden	?		3	1	
United Kingdom	irreg?	irreg?	1	1	

Explanation:

1 frequency of reporting (years) – one report only
1/2 frequency of reporting (years) – one report only
1-2 single report of varied frequency (1-2 years)
irreg irregular
varied several reports, of varied frequency
* planned frequency
? under review
(1) no national report; regional reports only
♣ thematic indicator report

Table 2. International reports by type, January 1998

Organisation	R Environ-mental reports	I Indicators reports	S Statistical compendia	T Thematic reports	O Other	U Unpub-lished
Framework Convention on Climate Change						1
CLRTAP						1
OSPARCOM					irreg	
1974 Helsinki Convention				irreg	irreg	1
Basel Convention					1	
Cites						1
Ramsar						1
Convention on the Protection and use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes						1
Nordic Council of Ministers		2				
OECD	2	irreg	2			
UN-ECE			irreg			
UNEP	2					
WRI	2					

The two exceptions are Romania, for which the only comparable report seems to be the national report prepared by the Ministry of the Environment for UNCED, and Belgium (for which reports are produced for Flanders and Walloon as environmental reporting policy is the competence of the Belgian regions). In addition, it should be noted that several other countries also produce sub-national reports: in the UK, for example, regular statistical compendia are produced for Scotland (*The Scottish Environment*); in Germany, several of the lander also produce separate reports.

The frequency of reporting of these national reports varies considerably (Figure 1). Whilst eight of the twenty-nine countries surveyed currently report (or plan to report) annually, and six report every two years, eleven of the reports are produced on a 4-5 year frequency, and in four cases reporting is irregular. In Sweden the reporting frequency is currently under-review, and has not yet been fixed; in the UK, also, the current irregular reporting cycle is being reviewed.

No reports meeting the criteria for environmental reports are produced under the international conventions considered here. The only international environmental reports are thus those produced by OECD, UNEP and WRI, all of which are published on a two-year cycle.

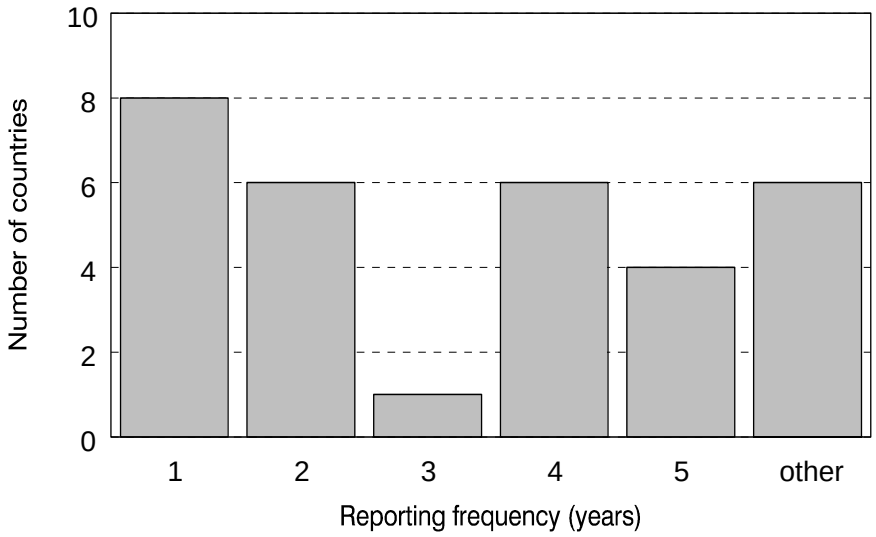
3.2. Indicator reports

The production of indicator reports has been a relatively recent phenomenon, and largely reflects the growing interest in developing and applying environmental indicators since the UNCED meeting in 1992. Only eight of the countries surveyed publish indicator reports, therefore, and of these publications have often been experimental. A regular reporting cycle has consequently not yet evolved in every case; in five of the countries, however, reporting is planned to be

annual. Given that a primary purpose of environmental indicators is to demonstrate trends, on the basis of a predefined set of measures, it may be expected that either an annual or biannual frequency will become the norm in most cases.

Internationally, only two indicator reports were identified from the organisations contacted. The Nordic Council of Ministers plan to publish an indicator report for the Nordic countries on a two-year cycle. OECD have already produced their first indicators report for OECD countries, but a regular reporting cycle has not yet been established.

Figure 1. Environmental reports: frequency of reporting



Notes: Number of countries sums to more than 29, because some countries produce more than one series of reports. Other = irregular or unspecified. Excludes Belgium (sub-national reports only).

3.3. Statistical compendia

Sixteen of the countries surveyed produce what might be termed statistical compendia, as defined in section 2, above. These range from detailed compilations of environmental data, primarily in tabular and/or graphic form, but often supported by maps and some explanatory text, to short 'pocket digests' of key facts and figures about the national environment.

As with indicator reports, the purpose of statistical compendia is seen to be to provide a regular update on environmental data. These reports are also relatively quantitative in content, comprising for the most part 'hard data' which are compiled on a routine basis. National statistical compendia thus tend to be produced comparatively regularly and frequently: ten of the sixteen countries producing statistical compendia do so annually; in two countries (Hungary and Italy), publication is biannual, in one (Sweden) every three years and one (Denmark) every four years. Two countries (Finland and Ireland) produce environmental statistical compendia only on an irregular basis.

Both OECD and UN-ECE also produce statistical compendia which include the European area: the former on a biannual basis, the latter irregularly.

3.4. Thematic reports

Despite the growing awareness over recent years of the need for an integrated approach to the environment, in most cases environmental management, monitoring and policy are still largely media-based. At the national level, therefore, different agencies or departments tend to be responsible for air, water and land. Each of these organisations tends to publish its own reports, either as part of its statutory obligation or in order to disseminate results of its work. A wide range of what might be classified as 'thematic reports' are therefore produced by the countries surveyed.

Information gathered on these types of reports has inevitably been patchy, for direct contact was not made with the very large number of different organisations responsible for different aspects of the environment at the national level. The nature of these reports, and their publication arrangements, also vary considerably. Within any one country, a large number of different reports may be produced, either separately (and often by different agencies) or as part of a series of reports, covering different media or issues. Summarising reporting frequencies for these types of report is therefore difficult. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the majority of these thematic reports are produced annually: in twelve out of the 14 countries for which reports were identified, publication of at least some reports took place on an annual basis.

At the international level, many of the environmental conventions which have been adopted – and the secretariats and other bodies consequently set up – have similarly been focused on specific media or issues. Few of these appear to produce explicit thematic reports, however: the main exception is HELCOM which publishes both pollution load compilations and evaluations for the Baltic Sea.

3.5. Other and unpublished reports

A wide range of other reports are also produced at the national and international level. These include annual reports on activities and progress, special studies and project reports, policy reviews, action plans and strategies, and performance reviews and assessments. Whilst many of these provide valuable contextual information, they typically contain relatively little quantitative information – and that which they do include is often secondary information which is also published elsewhere.

In the case of international conventions, there is also a tendency to compile data on a regular and systematic basis from member countries, but not necessarily to disseminate these in a report form (though summaries may be included in annual progress reports or reviews). These conventions thus provide a source of potentially valuable unpublished data. Special arrangements would need to be made, however, if these data were to be passed on routinely to the EEA.

4. Trends

State of environment reporting in Europe is in a formative and dynamic phase. New approaches to reporting are developing, in response for example to the emergence of concepts such as sustainable development, public participation and indicators. New obligations for reporting are becoming established, in response to both national policy and international agreements (e.g. UNCED). New forms of reporting are also appearing, most especially through the development of computing technologies. All these changes have wide-ranging impacts on the style, structure, content and frequency of state of environment reports.

Within this context, three important trends in state of environment reporting may be noted, which are likely to affect the frequency of reporting and the availability of state of the environment information, as follows.

4.1. Sustainable development

The emergence of the concept of sustainable development is expanding the focus of attention from the narrow area of environment *per se*, to the wider issues of its links with society, quality of life, human health and economy. Significantly, also, the concept of sustainability implies consideration not only of long-term, inter-generational effects, but also shorter-term effects on quality of life, communities and economies. In response to this development, a number of countries have begun to develop what might be termed 'sustainability reports' (or Agenda 21 reports in the terminology of WRI 1996). The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in 1992, was a major factor in establishing these concepts, and a number of such reports were compiled for this meeting. Since then, the concept of sustainable development has begun to be more widely integrated into environmental policy at both the national and international level (e.g. within national environmental action plans). This is likely to lead to an increasing shift towards issues of sustainable development in SoE reports, and ultimately, perhaps, the routine publication of sustainability reports.

4.2. Indicators

Environmental (and sustainability) indicators are increasingly being developed, as a means of providing information in a more understandable and policy-relevant way. Over recent years, there has thus been a trend towards the publication of 'indicator' reports – a pattern which seems likely to continue. The use of indicators places emphasis on changes over time, and is likely to encourage more frequent and regular reporting. At the same time, the development of formal sets of indicators – often based upon international lists – is helping to establish greater comparability between state of environment reports. This is likely to facilitate harmonisation of, and collation of information from, state of environment reports. At the same time, the adoption of national indicators makes it more difficult to represent regional or local issues within these reports. This is therefore likely to encourage the parallel development of more local and regional reports.

4.3. Reporting technologies

Possibly the most important factor to affect the nature and frequency of state of environment reporting has been recent developments in computing technology. This is leading to a shift away from traditional paper-based forms of reporting to digital forms – for example, on diskette, CD-ROM and, especially, Internet (see SERIS at the EEA homepage httm://www.eea.eu.int). At the time of the survey only a minority of countries and agencies were posting full reports on the World Wide Web. Several others are already publishing summaries, however, and a further seven countries stated that they were planning to make their reports available via Internet.

The capability to publish state of environment reports on Internet has considerable implications for both the publication and use of the reports. Crucially, it is helping state of environment reports to break away from the traditional concept of a single, comprehensive document, produced at regular intervals, and become more dynamic information sources, which can be updated continuously, and accessed according to need. In this way they can also become more deeply integrated into the operation of the organisations concerned. They need no longer involve major projects to compile and prepare the information (often by outside consultants or by special production teams), but can be maintained more-or-less on a day-to-day basis by a wide range of different contributors.

Publication on Internet is also helping to establish stronger cross-links between the various state of environment reports. At present, this is mainly taking place at the institutional level – i.e. linking reports and/or databases produced by the owner organisation. In time, however, we might anticipate live the establishment of Internet links between different reports and data sources from different agencies and countries. Such links will enable users more easily to make comparisons between countries, or build up a picture of conditions at the international level. In turn, however, this capability will strengthen the need for greater comparability between reports from different countries and organisations.

4.4. Reporting strategies

In the light of these various developments, the character of state of environment reporting is changing, and several countries are currently undertaking comprehensive reviews of their reporting strategies. This is likely to lead to changes both in the range of reports published at the national level (and their link to regional/local reports) and the frequency of publication.

No clear trend in the frequency of publication is evident from this study: reporting frequencies are being increased for some reports and reduced for others. Nor is there any obvious trend towards harmonisation between countries. In general, however, there appears to be an attempt to adopt more systematic reporting strategies, with more clearly targeted reports, published on a more regular basis. It is also apparent that some countries are trying to tie in state of environment reporting more closely with other obligations: for example, the production of national environmental action plans (NEAPs) and national environmental health action plans (NEHAPs) and contributions to international reports. Where these interests are common between several countries or organisations, this may help to establish greater conformity in reporting schedules.

5. Implications

The wide range of state of environment reports produced at the national and international level are rich sources of information, not only for the organisations and countries directly concerned but also for a wide range of other users, including the EEA. In order to use much of this information at the trans-national or European, however, it is important that the reports can be brought together and integrated in a consistent form. The different reporting formats and frequencies, noted above, are clearly potential barriers to this integration. In particular, they are likely to make it difficult:

- to identify clear base years for European environmental data
- to undertake environmental comparisons between countries
- to aggregate environmental data across countries
- to quantify common trends in environmental conditions across countries
- to identify common data gaps and needs
- to define opportunities for collaborative action

In practice, the range of reporting frequencies in most countries is relatively small. Most counties produce at least some reports on a regular basis, and normally on a cycle of no more than 3-4 years. Table 3 illustrates the availability of major reports

Table 3. Past and planned reporting schedules for state of environment reports

Country	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Austria	R1	R2	R1		R1	R2	R1		R1	R2
Belgium: Walloon	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Belgium: Flanders		R		R		I	I	R/I	I	I
Bulgaria		R	R							
Croatia		R		R		R?		R?		R?
Czech Republic				R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S
Denmark		S/I	I	R/I	I	S/I	I	R/I	I	S/I
Estonia	R	R	R	R	R/I	R/I	R/I	R/I	R/I	R/I
Finland		S	R1	R1/R2	R1/I	R1/S	R1/I	R1/R2	R1/I	R1/S
France		R1		R2/I	S	R1/S	S	R2/S	S	R1/S
Germany	S	R/S	S	R/S	S	R/S	S	R/S	S	R/S
Greece	S	S	S/R	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Hungary		I	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Iceland					R?					R?
Ireland				R					R	
Italy				S	R	S	R	S	R	S
Latvia		R		R	S	S	S	S	S	S
Liechtenstein					R				R	
Lithuania	R	R	R							
Luxembourg		R			R/S	S	S	S	S	R/S
Netherlands	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S
Norway	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S	R/S
Poland	R/S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Portugal	R	R	R	R	R	R?	R?/I?	R?/I?	R?/I?	R?/I?

Romania										
Slovak Republic	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Slovenia			R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Spain	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Sweden	S			S			S			S
United Kingdom	R	R	R	R/I	R	R	R	R	R	R

(environmental reports, indicator reports and statistical compendia, in the terminology adopted for this study) for the countries and organisations surveyed, based upon past and planned publication schedules. In using this Table it should be remembered that:

- significant time lags may exist between the year(s) to which the data relate and the date of publication, so the date of publication gives only a general guide to the comparability of the information;
- in many cases, reporting organisations are unable to keep to their planned publication schedules, and reports may be delayed;
- new publication schedules are likely to be developed as reporting frequencies are reviewed or as new reports emerge.

Nevertheless, it is evident that environmental reports of some kind should normally be available for most countries within a time frame of no more than 2-3 years. The main exceptions are in countries which have not as yet established clear reporting systems. In trying to compile European information, or make cross-country comparisons, therefore, differences in reporting frequency are likely to be far less important than other differences in national state of environment reports – for example, in their general availability, their scope and content, or their format and details of definition, measurement and data recording.
It is, in any case inappropriate and unrealistic to suggest that the various reports should be wholly standardised. Indeed, much of the strength of the current reporting procedures is that they are a varied response to the varied needs of the users and reporting agencies. Reporting frequencies, for examples, cannot be universally prescribed, but must vary according to:

- rates of change in environment
- the costs of monitoring/reporting
- detection limits/capacity of monitoring networks/methods
- the needs of users

There are, however, potential advantages in some co-ordination and harmonisation of the reporting schedules for state of environment reports.
As has already been noted, many organisations are already beginning to examine and review their reporting strategies. Currently, these reviews are being carried out largely in isolation. Whilst there is likely to be little merit in trying to establish common reporting dates, there would be clear advantages in co-ordinating these reviews, both to enable an exchange of experience between agencies who have produced reports at different intervals and in different ways, and to discuss possibilities of harmonising reporting schedules to a greater extent.

> Again, the EEA could play an important part in this process – for example by organising and hosting a meeting to discuss reporting strategies and schedules.

6. Conclusions

This study has considered the frequency of state of reporting in Europe at both the national and international level.
At the national level, the study has shown that:

- most countries now produce a range of state of environment reports
- reporting frequencies vary considerably, and not all countries report on a regular basis
- notwithstanding these variations in reporting frequency, substantive reports are normally available for most countries within a time-frame of 2-3 years
- whilst variations in reporting frequency may inhibit the compilation and comparison of environmental information across countries, therefore, they are likely to be less important than differences in the scope, content and format of the reports, and in the definitions, measurement and coding of the data they contain.

At the international level, regular reporting is undertaken by a number of agencies, including OECD, UNEP and WRI. In contrast, relatively little reporting takes place on the basis of the conventions examined. This information could usefully be made available to the EEA, with little additional effort. Indeed a strong case can be made for better dissemination of this information, both to meet the objectives of the conventions themselves, and to satisfy the principles of the EU policy on public access to environmental information.

Annex 1: National Reports, end of 1997

Country	Report title	Frequency (years)	Type	Language	Publisher
Austria	Umweltsituation in Oesterreich	2	R	Ge, En	Umwelbundesamt (UBA)
	Environment Data (Short) Report	1	R	Ge	Statistical Office and UBA
	Water quality report	1	T	Ge	Fed. Min. Agr & Forestr +UBA
	Forest damage report	1	T	Ge	Fed. Forest Research Inst/Fed. Min. for Agric. and Forestry
	'Green report' on agriculture	1	T	Ge	Fed. Min. Agric. & Forestry
	Energy report	1	T	Ge	Fed Min. for Economic Affairs
	Climate protection report	1	T	Ge	Fed. Min. Env. Youth and Fam.
	Federal Waste Management Report	3	T	Ge, En	Fed. Min. Env. Youth and Fam.
	Tropospheric ozone report	1	T	Ge	Umwelbundesamt
	Air quality report for densily populated areas (prov. capitals)	Daily	bulletin	Ge	Umwelbundesamt
Belgium	Etat de l'environnement Wallon	1	R	Fr	Walloon Ministry of the Environment
	Annuaire de l'environnement Wallone	1	R	Fr	
	Milieu en natuurrapport Vlaanderen	2	R	Du	Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij
Bulgaria	Yearbook on the state of the environment in the republic of Bulgaria	2	R	Bu	Ministry of the Environment
Croatia	Republic of Croatia national report on the environment and development	2	R	En	Ministry of Environmental Protection
Czech Republic	Report on the state of the environment in the Czech republic	1	R	Cz, En	Ministry of Environment
	Statistical environmental yearbook of the Czech republic	1	S	Cz, En	Ministry of Environment and Czech Statistical Office
	Air pollution in the Czech republic	1	T	Cz, En	Czech Hydrometeorological Institute
	Hydrological yearbook	1	T	Cz, En	
Denmark	Environment and society (*Miljø og samfund*)	4	R	Da	Ministry of the Environment
	Environmental statistics report (*Tal om natur og miljø*)	4	S	Da, En	
	Environmental indicator report (*Miljøindikatorer*)	1	I	Da	
	Environmental policy report (*Miljøpolitisk redegørelse*)	4	O	Da	
	Technical reports on freshwater, groundwater, marine areas and air	1	T	Da	
Estonia	Estonian environment	1	R	Es, En	Estonian Environmental Information Centre
	Environmental monitoring	1	S	Es, En	
	Statistical reports on waste management, water use and air pollution	1	T	Es	
	Estonian environment: past, present and future	1996 only	O	Es	
Finland	The state of the Finnish environment	4	R	Fi, Sw (En)	Finnish Environment Institute
	Finland's natural resources and the environment	1	R	Fi, En	Statistics Finland
	Environment statistics	irregular	S	Fi	

France	L'environnement en France	4	R	Fr (En)	Institut Francais de
	L'environnement dans les Regions Francaises	4	R	Fr	l'Environnement
	Environmental performance indicators in France	irregular	I	Fr, En	
	Agriculture et environnement: les indicateurs	irregular	T	Fr	
	Environmental statistics report	1	S	Fr	
Germany	Daten zur Umwelt	2	R	Ge	Umweltbundesamt
	Umweltdaten Deutschland	2	S	Ge, En	
	Immissionsschutzbericht der Bundesregierung	4	T	Ge	BMU
	Waldzustandsbericht der Bundesregierung	irregular	T	Ge	
	Flie~gewasser der Bundesregierung	5	T	Ge	
	Daten zur natur	irregular	T	Ge	
	Verkehr in Zahlen	1	S	Ge	
	Statistisches Jahrbuch der Bundesrepublik Deutschland	1	S	Ge	
Greece	Greece: ecological and cultural reserve	irregular	R	Gr, En	Ministry of Environment, Physical
	Bathing water quality report (marine and coastal environments)	1	T	Gr, En	Planning and Public Works
	Waste recycling report	1	O	Gr	idem
	Dangerous waste report	3	O	Gr	
	Report on the quality of marine environment for gulfs and Aegean and				idem
	Ioanian seas	1	T	Gr	idem
	Quality of inland waters	1	T	Gr	Municipalities/Min. of the Env.
	Air pollution in individual cities	1	T	Gr	Ministry of Environment
	Monitoring of fusion quality of mobile and immobile sources	1	T	Gr	
Hungary	State of the environment in Hungary (summary report)	1	R	Hu, En	Ministry of Environment and
	State of the environment in Hungary (detailed report)	4 (planned)	R	Hu	Regional Policy
	Environmental indicators of Hungary	1	I	Hu, En	
	Environmental statistics report	2	S	Hu, En	
	Thematic reports	2 (planned)	T	Hu	
	Environmental trend analysis	8 (proposed)	I	Hu, En	
	Environmental performance report	2 (proposed)	O	Hu, En	
Iceland	State of environment in Iceland (detailed report)	4-5 (planned)	R	Ic	Ministry for the Environment
	State of environment in Iceland (summary/progress report)	S	R	Ic	
Ireland	State of the environment in Ireland	5	R	En	Environmental Protection
	Irish environmental statistics	irregular	S	En	Agency
Italy	State of the environment report	2 (approx)	R	It, En	Ministero dell' Ambiente
	Compendium of environmental statistics	2	S	It (En)	ISTAT
	Environmental indicators report	irregular (planned)	I	It	Ministero dell' Ambiente/ ISTAT

Latvia	State of environment in Latvia Overview of state of environment in Latvia Environmental protection and use of natural resources in Latvia	irregular irregular 1	R O S	En La La, En	Latvian Environment Data Centre
Liechtenstein	State of the environment in Liechtenstein	5 (planned)	R	Ge	Amt fur Wald, Natur und Landschaft
Lithuania	Lithuania's environment: status, processes and trends State of the natural environment in Lithuania	irregular irregular	R O	Li, En Li, En	Environmental Protection Ministry
Luxembourg	La rapport sur l'etat de l'environnement Environmental statistical compendium	5 1	R S	Fr Fr	Ministere de l'Environnement
Netherlands	Milieubalans (Environmental balance) Milieuverkenning (National environmental outlook) Natuurverkenning (Nature outlook) Environmental statistics of the Netherlands	1 4 3 1	R O T I	Du Du Du Du, En	RIVM CBS
Norway	State of environment in Norway Pollution in Norway	2 1	R T	No, En	GRID-Arendal Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
Poland	State of environment in Poland Environmental protection in the year ...	irregular 1	R S	Pl, En Pl	State Inspectorate for Environmental Protection; GRID Central Statistical Office
Portugal	State of the environment in Portugal Environmental indicators report	1(4-5 planned) 1 (planned)	R I	Po Po	Direccao Geral do Ambiente
Romania	None reported				
Slovak Republic	State of the environment in the Slovak republic Air pollution in the Slovak republic Water quality of surface waters in the Slovak republic Groundwater quality in the Slovak republic Waste management in the Slovak Republic	1 1 1 1 irregular	R T T T T	Sl Sl Sl Sl Sl	Ministry of Environment
Slovenia	Report on the State of the Environment Air Pollution in Slovenia Water Quality in Slovenia	1 1 1	R T T	En So, En So, En	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
Spain	*Informe de medio ambiente en Espana* *Gasto publico en medio ambiente en Espana* *Sustema espanol de indicadores ambientales* *Inventario forestal nacional*	1 1 1 1	R R T T	Sp Sp Sp Sp	Ministerio de Medio Ambientale
Sweden	Our environment Environmental monitoring in Sweden (topics include air quality, marine and fresh waters) The natural environment in figures Environmental accounting	under review 1 3 under review	R T S S	Sw Sw Sw Sw	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Statstics Sweden

United Kingdom	Digest of environmental and water protection statistics The UK environment Indicators of sustainable development for the United Kingdom Environment in your pocket Air pollution in the UK (NB National reporting strategy under review)	1 irregular 2 1 1	R R I S T	En En En En En	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (previously DoE)

Annex 2: International organisations, end of 1997

Nordic Council of Ministers	Indicators of the State of the Environment in the Nordic Countries	2	I		Nordic Council of Ministers
OECD	OECD environmental data compendium The state of the environment (in OECD countries) Environmental performance reviews (environmental situation in member countries) Environmental indicator reports	2 2 irregular irregular	S R O I	En, Fr En, Fr En, Fr En, Fr	OECD, Paris
WRI	World resources: a guide to the global environment	2	R	En	WRI, UNEP, UNDP, World Bank
UN-ECE	Environmental statistics in Europe and North America	irregular	S	En	UN-ECE
UNEP	Global environmental outlook report Environmental data report	2 10	O R	En En	GEMS Monitoring and Assessment Researh Centre

Annex 3: International conventions, end of 1997

Organisation	Report title/information reported	Frequency (years)	Type	Publisher
Framework Convention on Climate Change	National emissions of greenhouse gases (CO2, CH4, N20, NOx, CO, NMVOC) by source Future projections Assessment methods Policies, targets and control measures	regular (not specified)	U	
CLRTAP				
The 1985 Helsinki Protocol	National sulphur emissions and calculation method	annual	U	
1988 Sofia Protocol	National NOx emissions Methods of assessment Standards and extent of enforcement Pollution control measures Progress in making unleaded fuel available Measures to facilitate technology exchange Progress in applying critical loads	annual	U	
The 1991 Geneva Protocol	National VOC emissions (by sector as far as possible) Standards and pollution control measures and extent of enforcement Measures to facilitate technology exchange Detailed VOC emission estimates, by sector, suitable for modelling	annual as agreed	U	
The 1994 Oslo Protocol	Progress on compliance	irregular	U	
OSPARCOM	Regional and convention-wide holistic assessment reports	irregular	O	OSPARCOM
Basel Convention	Reporting and Transmission of Information under the Basel Convention – Compilation (includes data on imports, exports, disposal, reduction measures, health effects, accidents, competent authorities)	1	O	Secretariat of the Basel Convention
Cites	Addresses of exporters and importers Number and type of permits issues States ion which trade occurred Number and types of specimens Names of species (and size/sex where applicable) Legislation, regulations and administrative measures	annual 2	U U	

Ramsar	National reports on wetlands List of RAMSAR wetlands	irregular irregular	O U	Ramsar Convention Bureau
1974 Helsinki Convention	Periodic assessment reports (3 to date) Pollution load compilations Evaluations and special reports Measures taken, effectiveness and problems Discharge permits Emissions Environmental quality	irregular irregular irregular Regular (not specified) irregular (as requested)	T T O U	HELCOM
Convention on the Protection and use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	Emissions and monitoring data for riparian waters Environmental conditions of transboundary waters Experience in application of best practice Control measures Permits for regulated discharges	irregular	U	