

**Memorandum of Understanding  
between  
the European Commission  
and  
the United Nations Environment Programme**

**Introduction**

Welcoming the longstanding cooperation on environment in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication between the European Commission and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (the "Partners"),

Considering that the European Commission and UNEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (the "2004 MoU") with a view to strengthening cooperation between the Partners in the field of environment,

Considering the need to further strengthen the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority,

Considering the joint statement of the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 'The European Consensus' of 24 February 2006.

Considering the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 "Living well, within the limits of our Planet" of 20 November 2013, and its priority objective related to increasing the European Union's effectiveness in addressing environmental and climate related challenges,

Considering the European Commission Communications of 13 October 2011 "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: An Agenda for Change" and of 27 February 2013 "A decent life for all: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future" as well as the respective Council conclusions,

Considering the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/213 of 15 March 2013 deciding to "strengthen and upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme in the manner set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012",

Considering the need to further deepen and formalize the collaboration between the Partners to achieve common goals and objectives by making the greatest possible joint contribution to the strengthening of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of poverty eradication.

Considering the cooperation agreements UNEP has with the European Environment Agency and the Committee of the Regions,

Considering the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement signed in 2003 and amended in 2014 between the European Union, represented by the European Commission and the United Nations,

The Partners hereby agree that this Memorandum of Understanding (the 'MoU') will replace and supersede the MoU which was concluded between the Partners in 2004.

### **Purpose and principles**

1. Through this MoU, the Partners express their wish to enhance their collaboration in common areas of interest, including through dialogues on related policy matters. Through this collaboration the Partners will work together towards sustainable development and poverty eradication at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels as appropriate.
2. The collaboration on the basis of this MOU will:
  - Contribute to a coherent and comprehensive post-2015 approach to sustainable development and poverty eradication, as well as to other related ongoing UN processes;
  - strengthen the mainstreaming of environment into all policy areas, including taking into account the UNEP inter-agency mandate and the One UN delivery mechanisms;
  - Be based on respect for, and mutual understanding of, the respective strengths, organisational structures, mandates and institutional capacities, as well as the programmes of work and policies of both organisations;
  - Aim at enhancing the overall effectiveness, quality and impact of the activities in the areas covered; and
  - Allow for better coordination and more strategic cooperation, building on strong inter-institutional policy dialogue and exchange.

### **Areas for collaboration**

3. The Partners have agreed to reinforce their policy dialogue related to potential areas of interest such as international environmental governance, climate change, green economy, biodiversity and sustainable management of resources, disaster resilience and disaster risk reduction, environmental security, science-policy interface for evidence-based approaches, and emerging environmental issues and the related strategic cooperation to support the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development, climate and environment goals. The specific areas for dialogue and cooperation will be spelled out in Annex to this MOU. The Annex will be agreed upon at the first High Level Meeting following the signature of this MoU.

The areas mentioned above form part of UNEP's mandate and programme of work and have been approved by UNEP's Governing Bodies. These areas are

also priorities for the European Commission. The list of areas is not exhaustive.

## Organisation of the collaboration

4. The implementation of the MoU will be organised through:
  - **A High Level Meeting** (HLM) between the European Commission and the UNEP Secretariat to hold regular policy dialogue and provide strategic guidance for the collaboration. More specific policy dialogues may be set-up at expert level as deemed necessary to address matters of common interest;
  - **Focal Points** to service the High Level Meeting, give visibility to its activities, and disseminate lessons and best practices learned through the Partnership;
  - **Programme Steering Committees** (PSC) responsible for the implementation of any agreed financial cooperation, if so required by separate contracts governing such cooperation between the Partners. The PSCs shall define and implement any subsequent activities, projects and programmes which entail the transfer of funds between the Partners.
5. The High Level Meeting will in principle be held once a year at senior level. Representatives of the European External Action Service, the European Environment Agency and the Secretariats of UNEP-administered Multilateral Environment Agreements may be invited to attend specific sessions. The HLM will give strategic guidance on jointly agreed priorities and will adopt, review and amend the Annex, as necessary to allow for a timely response to new and emerging issues.
6. The Programme Steering Committees will work according to the terms of the various contracts under which they were established. To the extent possible, the Committees will meet jointly to promote a coherent overall approach to cooperation under relevant EU financial instruments.
7. The focal points will be the European Commission's Directorate General for Environment and the Secretariat of UNEP's Executive Office – Office for Operations assisted by the UNEP Brussels Liaison Office to the EU. The focal points will make use of any existing joint structure established for the cooperation between Partners. Focal points will aim at facilitating, coordinating and monitoring policy dialogues and strategic cooperation, thereby contributing to a more consistent and streamlined partnership and providing a complete overview to the HLM.
8. Implementation of subsequent activities, projects and programmes will be detailed in separate arrangements between the Partners, which would be developed in line with the Partners' respective regulations, rules and policies and upon the conclusion of this MoU.

9. The Partners will reciprocally, and as appropriate, invite each other to major meetings, regional fora, and special events relevant to the implementation of this MoU.

**Signature, review, revision and termination of the MoU**

10 a. This MoU will take effect upon signature by both Partners.

10 b. This MoU is not intended to and does not create legally binding obligations between the Partners.

10 c. The Partners will review the implementation of the MoU at regular intervals and at least every three years.

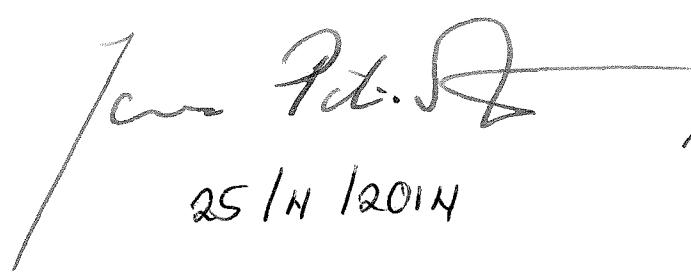
10 d. The Partners may amend this MoU, including any Annexes thereto, by mutual written agreement, which is to be appended to this MoU and will become an integral part of it.

10 e. Either Partner may terminate this MoU by giving 3 months' prior written notice to the other Partner.

Done at 25/4/2014

Member of the European Commission

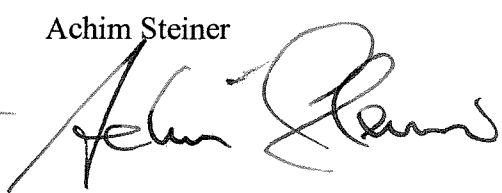
Janez Potočnik



25/4/2014

Executive Director of UNEP

Achim Steiner



25/4/2014