12 October 2026

LETTER OF EXPLANATION

On the Membership of the Group of Eastern European States in the context of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

The views expressed in this letter are shared and supported by the following parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine (parties are listed in the alphabetical order; the list was updated on 3 November 2026)

The primary purpose of this letter is to explain some basic facts about the past interactions between the group of Eastern European States on the one hand and parties from Central Asia on the other hand and to provide a forward-looking perspective for further collaboration.

At the outset, it is important to mention that there is a clear distinction between: 1) the group of Eastern European states and 2) the Europe and Central Asia network. The major distinct features of those two different groupings are as follows:

1) **The group of Eastern European states**[1]**:** This United Nations regional group is relevant for elections and appointments and includes 23 countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.
2) **The Europe and Central Asia network (the ECA network)**[2]**:** This is one of the regional networks of the UNEP OzonAction Compliance Assistance Programme and includes only Article 5 parties, with 11 members: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Turkmenistan. Representatives of the countries of economies in transition (CEITs) might attend the ECA network activities as well.

These terms cannot be used interchangeably, as those platforms have different formats and purpose. In the past, the parties from Central Asia participated in the ECA network, but they were never part of the group of Eastern European states.

We have always based our approach to the UN regional groups on the understanding that the practice under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (hereafter as „Vienna Convention") and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (hereafter as „Montreal Protocol") has been to refer to the names of the UN regional groups, which correspond to the names used in the list maintained by Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations Secretariat. These regional groups are: African States; Asia-Pacific States; Eastern European States; Latin American and Caribbean States; Western European and other States.

This practice has also been supported by the neutral advice provided by the secretariat of the Montreal Protocol. The most recent document of the secretariat was prepared for the OEWG-48

[1] UN regional groups of Member States: https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups
[2] Montreal Protocol Network for Europe and Central Asia **(**ECA network): https://www.unep.org/ozonaction/networks/europe-central-asia

and ExMOP-6, entitled „Summary of background information on membership of the group of Eastern European States[3]" (see particularly paragraphs 9, 30 and 31). The secretariat shows that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management lists 23 members of the group of Eastern European States as indicated above under point 1).

It is our conviction that the established practice of the membership of the UN regional groups as explained by the secretariat is to be respected and maintained. For the sake of clarity and transparency, we hereby confirm the secretariat´s explanation that the current composition of the group of Eastern European States in the context of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol comprises 23 members as indicated above under point 1) and explained in the note by the secretariat referred to above.

It is noted that no country can enforce its admission to a regional group when there is no consensus amongst the group's current members.

The UN regional groups referred to above are used for the elections to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention, the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol and the Implementation Committee.

On a few occasions in the past, some parties that are not part of the group of Eastern European States, such as the Republic of Türkiye and some parties from Central Asia, were nominated by the group of Eastern European States for the elected bodies. These nominations were based on consensus of all 23 member states of the group of Eastern European States but did not constitute the membership of those countries in the group of Eastern European States, as there was no decision made to change the composition of the group.

In addition, it should be noted that elections for the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund are governed by the terms of reference of the Fund and follow rules that are different from those concerning the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties and the Implementation Committee. This was confirmed in paragraph 40 of the secretariat´s note referred to above.

An Invitation to a Continued Collaboration

We highly value the collaboration that has been taking place so far within the ECA network (as explained under point 2) above) between the Eastern European States and parties from Central Asia. We hereby express our wish to continue this fruitful and valuable collaboration in the Montreal Protocol related matters.

The Eastern European States, that have joined this letter, are open to welcome the parties from Central Asia as observers in the meetings of the group of Eastern European States. In a spirit of constructive collaboration between the Eastern European States and parties from Central Asia, we are also open to explore options to nominate parties from Central Asia by the group of Eastern European States to positions on the bodies under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, when there is consensus among the Eastern European States and parties from Central Asia, on the assumption that this will not have any effect on changing the composition of the group of Eastern European States as indicated above under point 1).

[3] Summary of background information on membership of the group of Eastern European States UNEP/OzL.Pro.WG.1/48/INF/4/Rev.1, UNEP/OzL.Pro.ExMOP.6/INF/1/Rev.1

With this, we firmly believe that our mutual collaboration between the Eastern European States and parties from Central Asia will be further enhanced, while the established practice is well preserved.