

Annex I

CRITICAL LOADS AND LEVELS

I. CRITICAL LOADS OF ACIDITY

A. For Parties within the geographical scope of EMEP

1. Critical loads (as defined in article 1) of acidity for ecosystems are determined in accordance with the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. They are the maximum amount of acidifying deposition an ecosystem can tolerate in the long term without being damaged. Critical loads of acidity in terms of nitrogen take account of within-ecosystem nitrogen removal processes (e.g. uptake by plants). Critical loads of acidity in terms of sulphur do not. A combined sulphur and nitrogen critical load of acidity considers nitrogen only when the nitrogen deposition is greater than the ecosystem nitrogen removal processes. All critical loads reported by Parties are summarized for use in the integrated assessment modelling employed to provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings in annex II.

B. For Parties in North America

2. For eastern Canada, critical sulphur plus nitrogen loads for forested ecosystems have been determined with scientific methodologies and criteria (1997 Canadian Acid Rain Assessment) similar to those in the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. Eastern Canada critical load values (as defined in article 1) of acidity are for sulphate in precipitation expressed in kg/ha/year. Alberta in western Canada, where deposition levels are currently below the environmental limits, has adopted the generic critical load classification systems used for soils in Europe for potential acidity. Potential acidity is defined by subtracting the total (both wet and dry) deposition of base cations from that of sulphur and nitrogen. In addition to critical loads for potential acidity, Alberta has established target and monitoring loads for managing acidifying emissions.

3. For the United States of America, the effects of acidification are evaluated through an assessment of the sensitivity of ecosystems, the total loading within ecosystems of acidifying compounds, and the uncertainty associated with nitrogen removal processes within ecosystems.