



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

EB.AIR/WG.5/2001/1
1 December 2000

ORIGINAL : ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION ON
LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

Working Group on Strategies and Review
(Thirty-third session, Geneva, 24 - 27 September 2001)

FURTHER ASSESSMENT OF PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Progress report prepared by the Chairman of the ad hoc expert group
in collaboration with the secretariat

Introduction

1. This report presents progress in the further assessment of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), including the results of the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group on POPs, held in The Hague, Netherlands on 6-8 November 2000. The expert group took stock of relevant information on POPs and developed a long-term work plan.
2. Experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States participated in the meeting. Representatives from the Chemical Coordinating Centre (CCC) and the Meteorological Synthesizing Centre East (MSC-E) of EMEP, as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were also present.
3. Mr. David STONE (Canada) was elected to chair the expert group.

Documents prepared under the auspices or at the request of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for GENERAL circulation should be considered provisional unless APPROVED by the Executive Body.

I. REVIEW OF NEW INFORMATION ON SUBSTANCES

4. The expert group received the presentations listed below from experts. It agreed to make extended abstracts of these presentations available on its Internet page: www.unece.org/env/popsxg

A. Information on substances not included in the POPs Protocol

- (a) Brominated flame retardants, Niklas JOHANSSON (Sweden);
- (b) Risk profiles and summary reports for selected POPs, Eric VAN DE PLASSCHE (Netherlands);

B. Distribution of POPs in the environment

- (a) Substances found in remote locations in the Arctic, Keith PUCKETT (Canada);
- (b) Global cycling of POPs, Kevin JONES (United Kingdom);
- (c) The influence of POPs on plants, Jürgen FRANZARING (Netherlands);
- (d) Long-range transport of POPs, Victor SHATALOV (EMEP/MSC-E);
- (e) Global and European emission inventories, Joseph PACYNA (EMEP/CCC);
- (f) Monitoring of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and pesticides in the Netherlands, Jan DUIZER (Netherlands);

C. Policy-related issues

- (a) Stockpiles of lindane, Teodora GRNCAROVSKA (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
- (b) Pesticides in Croatia, Darka HAMEL (Croatia);
- (c) Criteria and procedures for identifying additional POPs as candidates for future international action, Bo WAHLSTROEM (UNEP);
- (d) Selection of priority substances by the dynamic selection and prioritization mechanism for hazardous substances (DYNAMEC) of the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), Håkan BJÖRNDAL (Sweden) and;
- (e) A note on the national strategy of Poland to control POPs, M. BORYSIEWIEWICZ and J. ZUREK (Poland).

II. PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME

5. The expert group was informed about work on POPs within the framework of the Convention. In particular, it received information on the progress made by the Task Force on the

Health Aspects of Air Pollution and its plans for the preparation of an assessment of the health effects of selected POPs (EB.AIR/WG.1/2000/12). It also was informed about the conclusions and recommendations related to POPs of the 1997 workshop held in Bad Harzburg (Germany).

6. The expert group discussed its role as described in the work plan adopted by the Executive Body at its seventeenth session (ECE/EB.AIR/68, annex IV, item 1.5). It felt that a clearer definition of the role of the expert group would be needed once the POPs Protocol had entered into force. This related, in particular, to its role in the technical reviews foreseen in Executive Body decision 1998/2. The expert group, therefore, seeks guidance from the Working Group on Strategies and Review on this matter.

7. The expert group noted the review requirement in the POPs Protocol. A number of product-related requirements in annexes I and II are subject to re-evaluation. For dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), the Protocol foresees that, no later than one year after the date of its entry into force and in consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Parties shall review the availability and feasibility of alternatives and, as appropriate, promote the commercialization of safer and economically viable alternatives to DDT. Exceptions to the restrictions on the use of DDT, heptachlor and lindane, are to be re-evaluated no later than two years after entry into force. Furthermore, the production and use of polychlorinated terphenyls and "ugilec" are to be reassessed under the Protocol by 31 December 2004.

8. The general review clause (art. 10) states that Parties specify at a session of the Executive Body the procedures, methods and timing for reviews. The first review shall be completed no later than three years after the entry into force. Information is to be supplied by Parties, EMEP, the Implementation Committee and other subsidiary bodies. The reviews are to take into account the best available scientific information on the effects of the deposition of the substances, assessments of technological developments and changing economic conditions.

9. Based on the work-plan item on the further assessment of POPs adopted by the Executive Body at its seventeenth session (ECE/EB.AIR/68, annex IV, item 1.5) and bearing in mind the provisions of Executive Body decision 1998/2 on information to be submitted and the procedure for adding substances to annexes I, II or III to the POPs Protocol, the expert group agreed to propose to the Working Group on Strategies and Review the following main tasks for the coming years (indicative timing of work is given for each task):

- (a) Review of the Protocol:
 - (i) Review requirements for specific substances given by the Protocol (ongoing, interim report prepared at the second meeting);
 - (ii) Review of information on substances in the Protocol, pursuant to article 10 of the Protocol as guided by the Executive Body (closer to the entry into force of the Protocol);
- (b) Assistance to Parties in preparing preliminary risk profiles and preliminary

summary reports on specific substances not yet included in the Protocol (ongoing);

(c) Technical reviews of Parties' proposals to add substances to the Protocol (after the entry into force of the Protocol and subject to a request by the Executive Body);

(d) Cooperation with other bodies (ongoing).

10. The expert group was aware that it could not be responsible for the preparation of risk profiles or summary reports as defined in Executive Body decision 1998/2, which it might be requested to review once they had been formally submitted to the Executive Body. This would be the task of the Parties to the POPs Protocol. It would provide assistance to those Parties that wished to discuss preliminary risk profiles or summary reports, or elements thereof, with other experts. The assistance would be limited to providing a transparent forum for expert discussion, facilitating the exchange of information between Parties.

11. The expert group requires guidance from the Working Group on Strategies and Review on the aspects that it should cover in its discussion of preliminary risk profiles and summary reports put forward. In particular, it would require advice on whether it is expected to cover both the aspects related to the risk profile and to the risk management or abatement of emissions and effects. The expert group also seeks guidance on the nature of the presentations to it of preliminary risk profiles and summary reports, in particular on whether these will be presented by the governmentally designated expert or on behalf of the Party to the Protocol.

12. The expert group noted that the North Carolina workshop had suggested that the expert group might assess substance priority-setting schemes. It decided to defer a decision on whether to initiate work on this topic until there was a better indication of an emerging need for the application of such schemes.

13. Based on these longer-term tasks, the expert group identified the following activities to be carried out in 2001:

- (a) Review requirements for specific substances set out in the Protocol:
 - (i) DDT (in consultation with WHO, FAO and UNEP) and heptachlor, led by Sally SHAVER (United States);
 - (ii) DDT as used in the manufacture of Dicofol, led by an expert from the Netherlands (to be determined);
 - (iii) Hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) lindane, led by experts from Austria, Germany and possibly others (to be determined);
 - (iv) Polychlorinated terphenyls, led by Greg FILYK (Canada);
 - (v) "Ugilec", led by an expert from Germany (to be determined).

This work should be guided by Executive Body decision 1998/2 and include, as available, information on production/uses/emissions and on socio-economic factors related to the

alternatives and/or the techniques available to reduce the emissions of the substance, including the information listed under paragraph 1 (ii) of Executive Body decision 1998/2. Experts will present a substantive progress report at the second meeting of the expert group;

(b) Assistance to Parties in preparing preliminary risk profiles and preliminary summary reports on specific substances not yet included in the Protocol:

- (i) Pentabromodiphenyl ether (PeBDE): work led by Niklas JOHANSSON (Sweden) based on a project of the Nordic Council of Ministers;
- (ii) Dicofol, hexachlorobutadiene, pentachlorobenzene and polychlorinated naphthalenes: work led by an expert from the Netherlands (to be determined).

A number of experts expressed interest in work on short-chained chlorinated paraffins and noted the work led by experts from the United Kingdom on risk assessments for short chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) to support regulatory action within the European Union. Experts were invited to take up SCCPs or to contribute to the work on the other substances listed above. The expert group noted the reference to pentachlorophenol (PCP) in the research article, but did not initiate work on this substance at this stage;

(c) Initiate closer cooperation with the most relevant organizations: a special session with other organizations, conventions and bodies would be organized during the second meeting of the expert group.

14. For both (a) and (b) above, the lead experts are encouraged to closely note the progress in the assessment of these substances within the Task Force on Health. A representative of that Task Force will be invited to report on progress at the next expert group meeting.

15. The expert group noted that documents used for the selection of substances for the POPs Protocol initially could be useful for Parties that were preparing proposals for additional substances. The documents reflected the state of knowledge of 1995/96 and would also be a useful historical record to make the selection of POPs transparent. They provided a database on individual substances and much of the information remained relevant. The documents also showed the gaps in knowledge that existed in 1995/96. Mr. Peter COLEMAN (United Kingdom) offered to collect the documents and make them available via the Internet (a link can be found on <http://www.unece.org/env/popsxg>).

16. The next meeting of the expert group was scheduled to be held in autumn 2001 in Poland, co-hosted by Canada and Poland.