

EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION ON
LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION
Bureau to the Executive Body

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU
TO THE EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION
16 September 2003, GENEVA**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman

1. The second meeting of the Bureau in 2003 was chaired by the Chairman of the Executive Body, Mr H Dovland (Norway), and was attended by Vice-chairmen Mr L Lindau (Sweden), Mr I. Mojic (Slovakia), Mr J Schneider (Austria), Mr R Ballaman (Switzerland), Mr P Széll (United Kingdom) and Mr H Gregor (Germany). Mr K Bull attended for the UNECE secretariat. Mr W Harnett (United States) sent his apologies.
2. The agenda was adopted on the understanding that activities related to the enlargement of the European Union would be discussed under agenda item 7.

I. NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF 11 APRIL 2003

3. The note of the previous meeting (EBBureau/2003/1) had been circulated and agreed, and was available through the Executive Body's web page. Actions from the previous meeting were dealt with under agenda items below.

II. STAFFING OF THE SECRETARIAT

4. Mr Bull informed the Bureau of the recruitment of staff to replace Henning Wuester and Radovan Chrast. Ms Albena Karadjova had been appointed as Mr Wuester's replacement and had taken responsibility for the EMEP Steering Body, the Implementation Committee and the Working Group on Strategies and Review. An appointment for the secretary of the Working Group on Effects had been made; Mr Matti Johansson from Finland would take up the post in November. Ms Meijke Hertoghs was acting as secretary to the Working Group on Effects on a temporary basis

III. AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY

5. The secretariat had circulated a draft agenda for the next session of the Executive Body to be held in December 2003. Some minor amendments had been proposed by Bureau members and these were incorporated into the draft. The Bureau agreed to the agenda with the proposed amendments.

6. The Bureau also discussed the need for it to meet again prior to the Executive Body session and noted that such a meeting could be held on the morning of Monday 14th December if necessary. It also discussed the need for a further meeting with the European Commission's Clean Air for Europe (CAFÉ) secretariat which could be held at the time of the Executive Body session.

7. With regard to specific discussions of the 25th anniversary of the Convention at the session of the Executive Body, the Bureau agreed to discuss the matter further under item IX below.

IV. THE KIEV MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

8. The Bureau took note of the Ministerial Declaration made at the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" held in Kiev in May 2003. It appreciated the recognition of the Convention's efforts to establish a long-term funding mechanism for its core activities, but regretted that ministers had not been able to use stronger language to encourage Parties to make contributions.

V. ACTIVITIES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

9. Mr P. Szell provided the Bureau with a summary of the recent meeting of the Implementation Committee. He noted that there were currently four broad categories of non-compliance case involving individual Parties: cases that were now closed because the Party in question was judged to be in compliance; those where the Party would soon achieve compliance; those where compliance would take several years but where there was continued dialogue with the Implementation Committee directed towards speeding the process; and cases where compliance was not foreseen in the medium or even longer term and communications with the Party was proving difficult. With regard to annual reporting by Parties, he drew attention to the continuing improvement in the completeness and timing of both emissions reporting and reporting on strategies and policies.

10. Mr Szell reported that the Committee had spent some time reviewing the draft 2004 questionnaire on strategies and policies, but soon realised that if it were to do the job properly it needed more time than had been allocated and, moreover, it needed to make its input while the secretariat was still in the process of drafting the text and not, as at present, a few weeks before the text was due to be presented to the Executive Body.

11. The Bureau noted that the Committee had considered the usefulness of the Guidelines on Compliance and Implementation that had been adopted by the environmental ministers at their conference at Kiev. While the Guidelines said nothing that was new or that warranted specific action by the Executive Body, it was felt that they summarized, in a clear and constructive manner, important information for Parties unfamiliar with the implementation processes, and the Bureau recommended the secretariat consider placing them on the Convention's web site. Mr Bull noted that an intern in the secretariat had prepared some draft implementation guidelines for the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Heavy Metals Protocols during the summer. These would be considered further by the secretariat in the coming months.

12. Mr Szell informed the Bureau that the Committee had started to discuss possible further steps it could recommend the Executive Body to take in cases of non-compliance where the Party

in question did not appear to be taking its obligations seriously. An initial list of possibilities was drawn up and it would be used as the starting point for further discussion at the Committee's next meeting.

13. Finally, Mr Szell outlined the mandate that the Committee was asking the Executive Body to give it for 2004. As laid down in its terms of reference, the Committee's principal task would remain the processing of the individual cases that had been, or would be, presented to it. In this regard, it was noted that, after a three year gap, the Committee was due to revisit the case of Slovenia in 2004. Among the other mandate issues considered, the Committee had concluded that it would be premature to carry out an in-depth review of the Protocol on POPs in 2004 and therefore proposed the mandate specify that next year it merely prepare the ground for an in-depth review of that Protocol in 2005.

VI. COORDINATION OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

14. Mr Gregor reported on the recent session of the Working Group on Effects. He noted the increasing participation of countries from the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asian (EECCA) region both in the Working Group and Task Force activities. He also drew attention to the increased cooperation between ICPs, the effective collaboration with EMEP and the Working Group on Strategies.

15. He noted the progress made by the Working Group on Effects and its subsidiary bodies in particular in the areas of: ozone effects, where new critical levels for vegetation were being devised and critical levels approaches agreed for possible application to integrated assessment modelling; nitrogen, where the behaviour and long-term effects had been studied and empirical critical loads had been revised; and heavy metals, where preliminary approaches for using critical loads for lead and cadmium had been tested (2001/2) and further developed and those for mercury expected to be completed by 2005 – this work was being reported to the Expert Group on Heavy Metals. He indicated that it would be necessary to address non-atmospheric inputs of heavy metals to agricultural soils, e.g. from fertilizers, in order to calculate critical loads exceedances; additional expert advice would be needed for such estimates.

16. Mr Gregor drew attention to recent estimates of exceedances of critical loads using the ecosystem-specific deposition data from the new unified EMEP model. These showed increased areas of exceedances across Europe indicating the need for further emission reductions. He also noted progress in the work on dynamic modelling that could have important implications for future policy, whilst indicating that work on nitrogen dynamics was lagging behind that on acidification. He stressed that the modellers required guidance on the use of a "target year" for their work, and this question would be posed to the Working Group on Strategies and Review. He also identified a need for base cation data for estimating critical loads exceedances, and the need to harmonize land cover information between bodies under the Convention. He noted the new work on cultural heritage by the newly established sub-centre in Rome.

17. Finally he summarized the work that had been done in the preparation of the Working Group's substantive report on the status and trends in the effects of air pollution. He noted that a consultant had completed a first draft that had been submitted to the Working Group on Effects and its Bureau and that a timetable for completion had been agreed. It was planned to have a final report in readiness for the twenty-third session of the Working Group in 2004 and therefore in time for the Convention's anniversary celebrations.

18. Mr Schneider noted the EMEP Steering Body session that had taken place the previous week. He drew attention to the development of the EMEP unified (Eulerian) model that was now performing well. The model would be reviewed at a workshop to be held in November in Oslo. There were still some problems predicting particulate matter (PM) concentrations and these were important for estimating human health effects. He further stressed that the model predicted higher depositions with ecosystem-specific calculations and noted the increased critical loads exceedances that resulted. Mr Schneider noted the effective collaboration with the Working Group on Effects with regard to the work on heavy metals. For heavy metals however there was concern that emission inventories fell short of what was required for effective modelling. The same was true for POPs. Now that the emission reporting guidelines were in place there was more emphasis being placed upon the quality of the data reported.

19. With regard to work by WHO he noted that recent discussions had led to the recognition that human health effects may take place below the threshold of 60ppb used for the work on the Gothenburg Protocol. This would have important implications for the review of that Protocol.

20. Mr Schneider noted that Norway had proposed to chair the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections. He also reported that discussions on the proposed new monitoring strategy had failed to reach consensus on the minimum monitoring requirements. The Task Force on Measurements and Modelling was asked to consider the issue further and report back to the next session of the Steering Body.

21. Integrated assessment modelling work was progressing though the development of a baseline scenario though this had been delayed by lack of certain inputs. The workshop on synergies and linkages with global pollutants had been reported to the Steering Body and there was agreement that this needed further consideration. In addition, the work on hemispheric modelling would also be taken forward to develop a better scientific basis.

22. Mr Dovland drew attention to communications from the Netherlands regarding the emissions reporting guidelines. Mr Schneider indicated the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections would be looking into the matter and identifying both simple technical editorial changes and those that were of more significance for policy. It was noted that it was not intended to change the guidelines for some years and this should be clear to the Task Force and Parties.

23. The Bureau recognized the importance of the ecosystem-dependent deposition data now being used to calculate exceedances. This issue would need consideration by the Working Group on Strategies and Review and by the Executive Body.

24. The Bureau concluded that the scientific work was progressing well and appeared impressive. It stressed the need to communicate the science both simply and effectively to ensure Parties accepted the principles on which the work was based. Furthermore it recognized with the increasing interests from Parties in the East of the region that the geographical scope of the work and the maps in particular should be extended to cover all European and Central Asian Parties.

VII. PROTOCOLS: GOTHENBURG, POPS AND HEAVY METALS

25. The secretariat informed the Bureau on the status of Protocols. With recent ratifications of the Heavy Metals, POPs and Gothenburg Protocols by Romania, the numbers of ratifications for those three Protocols stood at 15, 17 and 6 respectively.

26. The Bureau discussed the entry into force of the Protocol on POPs due to take place on 23 October, and the procedures that were to be proposed to the Working Group on Strategies and Review related to the review of that Protocol (EB.AIR/WG.5/2003/8). It was noted that current practice under the Convention allowed for participation by all Parties to the Convention in discussions of any protocol-related issue. It was only for decisions related to a protocol that it was necessary to restrict participation to the Parties to that protocol. This ensured the involvement of potential Parties and served to encourage ratifications. It was proposed that this principle was used for the procedures related to the POPs Protocol. It was noted that the proposals included the establishment, by the Executive Body, of a new Task Force on POPs with a mandate to address the issues of collation of information for reviews of the Protocol. It was expected that the Working Group on Strategies and Review would forward the proposals to the Executive Body and the Parties to the Protocol for consideration. The Task Force could usefully build upon the expertise brought together for the Expert Group on POPs.

27. For work on the preparations for review of the Protocol on Heavy Metals, the lead country of the Expert Group on Heavy Metals (Germany) had considered holding a second meeting of the Expert Group in November but had now decided that it was better to hold a workshop at that time to address some of the technical and scientific issues. A second meeting of the Expert Group was planned for 31 March – 1 April 2004, to be held back to back with a workshop on mercury (to be held in Brussels 28-29 March).

28. With regard to the 1999 Gothenburg Protocol, Mr Ballaman informed the Bureau that there were a number of presentations to be made to the Working Group on Strategies and Review that would provide updated information on the progress made in preparation for review.

29. Mr Ballaman also informed the Bureau that the Working Group on Strategies and Review would be considering further the issue of information and technology exchange. It was understood that the Russian Federation would be proposing the preparation and distribution of a questionnaire to Parties in the EECCA region. It was hoped that this would gather the necessary information to allow further action to be planned. The Bureau agreed that this questionnaire should be circulated separately from the 2004 questionnaire on strategies and policies.

VIII. EU COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION WITH ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CAFÉ PROGRAMME

30. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the note of the High Level Coordinating Group meeting, between the Bureau and the CAFE secretariat, that took place in March had not yet been received. The Bureau expressed its concern that the European Commission was failing to take the HLCG meetings sufficiently seriously. The Bureau considered the need for a further meeting, possibly at the time of the Executive Body session.

31. Members of the Bureau involved with the CAFE process provided information on CAFE meetings and the proposed CAFE timetable. It was noted that the CAFE Target Setting Group had met and discussed possible targets for the future, including critical loads. Because of the links between targets and the RAINS model, further discussions on the model would be needed. The

Commission was planning to prepare a white paper on air pollution for spring 2005 as part of the review/revision process for the current EC directives. The Bureau recognized that the CAFE programme had an ambitious timetable, and there was likely to be pressure brought to bear on parts of the Convention's work, in particular that by the Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling that was receiving funds from the EC. It was also noted that CAFE was not addressing heavy metals and POPs. However, the EC had an interest in mercury and this would be addressed at the Brussels workshop in March.

32. Under this item the Bureau discussed proposals by Sweden to hold a workshop on future needs for air pollution strategies along the lines of that held in Saltsjobaden in April 2000. The workshop was being planned for autumn 2004 and a small steering group would be convened to develop plans further. While the Convention was taking the initiative for the workshop it would be important to involve the CAFE programme also.

33. Under this agenda item the Bureau discussed in depth the issue of EU enlargement. Members of the Bureau noted important activities under the Convention including, the strength of its scientific network, its links with North America, its links with non-accession countries in Europe and Central Asia, its links globally and hemispherically, and the experience and data holdings gained over many years. The Bureau agreed the Convention should continue to develop its areas of work especially for: monitoring, where long-term sites should be maintained and improvements made where needed; ozone and particulate matter, where North America had special interests; outreach to the EECCA region, where continued efforts were needed to ensure involvement of Parties; studies of synergies with the control of climate change gases, since the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change did not seem to be taking up this issue at present.

34. The Bureau also discussed the importance of the Convention in a global context, noting that it was seen as providing an important lead for other regions of the world. The possibilities for opening the Convention to countries outside the region were discussed together with the problems that this might create. It was agreed that such a step should not be taken without further careful consideration.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY – 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION

35. At its previous meeting, the Bureau had considered the possibilities for making use of the 25th anniversary of the Convention to draw attention to the achievements and work of the Convention. It had noted that both the adoption and opening for signature of the Convention took place on 13 November 1979 so the 25th anniversary would be on that date in 2004.

36. Mr Ballaman drew attention to a list covering a wide range of options that he had drawn up in discussion with Brinda Wachs of the secretariat. The options included alternative suggestions for an event to mark the occasion and proposals for publicity material. The Bureau discussed the various options concluding that it may prove difficult to mark the event with a ministerial conference unless there were issues of substance for the ministers to address. The timing of the event could also prove difficult. However, an Executive Body session in December as usual might provide a timely occasion with the possibility of some ministerial or high-level participation.

37. The Bureau proposed that it would be useful to have a small steering group to continue the organisational process, but agreed that the Bureau itself would act as this group for the present.

X COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

38. Mr Dovland and Mr Ballaman reported on the meeting of 3 July 2003, held jointly between the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Bureaux of the five ECE Environmental Conventions. A note of the meeting had been prepared for the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP/2003/24). The meeting had considered future activities of the Committee and collaborative activities between Conventions. The Bureau noted that while links between the Convention secretariats could be worthwhile on a regular basis, meetings between Convention Bureaux should be less frequent, and links between other bodies, such as compliance/implementation committees, might best be made informally. It was recognized that the Committee on Environmental Policy was keen to bring Convention's together and to establish beneficial links between itself and the Convention governing bodies. The Bureau while welcoming the possibilities for beneficial links, considered there were just a few areas where priorities between bodies overlapped, for example the emphasis on implementation in the EECCA region as a result of EU expansion. The Committee on Environmental Policy might also provide an alternative communication route to environment ministries especially where the Convention's secretariat had problems communicating with nominated delegates.

XI. STRATEGIES AND POLICIES REVIEWS

39. The secretariat informed the Bureau that preparation of the questionnaire on strategies and policies was well under way. The Implementation Committee had been provided with a draft for comment. While the Committee had made some immediate suggestions, it wished to have a more in-depth look at the questionnaire for the 2006 review (see item V above). The secretariat informed the Bureau that preparation of the questionnaire on strategies and policies was well under way. The Implementation Committee had been provided with a draft for comment. While the Committee had made some immediate suggestions, it felt it would be able to make a more thorough, and hence useful, contribution if it could be involved at an earlier stage in the preparatory process of future questionnaires (see item V above).

40. At present the questionnaire only covered the Protocols that were known to be in force in January 2004. If the Heavy Metals Protocol enters into force by that date, then this too should be included in the questionnaire.

XII. TRUST FUNDS

41. The secretariat provided information on the Convention's Trust Funds noting that there appeared to be some improvement in the contributions to the Trust Fund for core activities not covered by the EMEP Protocol. In addition for this Trust Fund, one Party, the UK, had announced contributions in kind while two others, Belgium and Monaco, had provided contributions for previous years.

XIII. SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION

42. The Bureau was informed that the secretariat had been more proactive in encouraging countries with economies in transition to participate in sessions of the main subsidiary bodies. This

had resulted in improved attendance but with matching higher costs. The Trust Fund for supporting countries with economies in transition was no longer balancing contributions with expenditure. Additional contributions would be needed for 2004 if this higher level of support was to be maintained. It was noted that the secretariat had prepared a paper for the Executive Body session for an updated decision on providing support to countries with economies in transition. This would be a good opportunity to draw attention to the needs of the Trust Fund.

XIV. OUTREACH AND EXTERNAL LINKS

43. International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations (IUAPPA). There had been no further communications with Mr Mills, the secretary general of IUAPPA, though Mr Bull would have the opportunity to speak with him at the forthcoming IUAPPA regional meeting to be held in October.

44. Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET). Mr Bull informed the Bureau that he had received an invitation from the secretariat of EANET to attend the Intergovernmental and Scientific Advisory Committee meetings in November 2003. The Bureau was keen that the links with EANET should be retained and strengthened and requested Mr Bull to seek permission from ECE to attend using the Trust Fund for that purpose.

45. EECCA strategy. Mr Schneider reported on a meeting held, on 30 June 2003, by ECE with OECD and other international bodies, including WHO/ECEH, to explore the development of collaborative projects related to the EECCA strategy adopted by ministers at their conference in Kiev. A WHO/ECE collaborative initiative had been drawn up and forwarded, as requested at the meeting, to the OECD EAP (Environmental Action Programme) Task Force that would meet later in September.

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

46. The Bureau considered its future membership under this agenda item.

XV. NEXT MEETING

47. The Bureau agreed that it might be convenient to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the next session of the Executive Body in December. This could be on Monday 15 December in the morning, or an evening later in the week.