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

NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING
Monday, room S4, Palais des Nations, 8 December 2014
10:00 – 13:00

Attendance: The following Bureau members attended: Ms. A. Engleryd, Mr. P. Grennfelt, Mr. W. Harnett, Mr. M. Schroeder, Mr. S. Vasiliev, and Ms. L. Rouil. Ms. V. Galatone was not able to participate. Mr. A. Zuber attended as an observer on behalf of the EU. Mr. M. Keiner, Mr. S. Ludwiczak, Ms. A. Karadjova, Mr. K. Olendrzynski, Mr. A. Mamazhanov, Ms. A. Novikova, Ms. K. Wenzel, and Ms. C. Sanz Noriega from the ECE secretariat attended. The meeting was chaired by Mr. M. Williams, Chair of the Executive Body. Ms. J. Kerr (Canada) attended the meeting to provide the North American perspective on certain issues on the agenda of the Executive Body Bureau.

1. Note on “Servicing the MEA Secretariats”

The Director of the UNEP Environment Division, Mr. M. Keiner, introduced a draft note on “Servicing the MEA Secretariats”. Owing to an increase in the number of Parties and bodies serviced by MEA secretariats over the past two decades, however without any increase in the related number of post, the level of performance of the secretariats might be compromised in future if no action is taken. The note was therefore drafted to give an overview of the key challenges to and opportunities for ensuring the sustainability and quality of the support provided by the ECE MEA secretariats in the mid to longer term (5–10 years), and to recommend a set of proposed actions to address them. Specifically, stable and predictable funding is needed to cover the core tasks of the secretariats.

The European Union pointed out that contributions on the basis of the UN assessment scale would put further pressure on Parties that are already strained and suggested to give voluntary contributions a higher political visibility instead.

While the secretariat acknowledged that mandatory contributions were difficult for countries in the current financial climate, it hoped for “indicated contributions”, which could be based on the UN scale of assessment.

Mr. Keiner informed the Bureau that the note is regarded as a living document. It has already been consulted internally and will now be consulted with the other MEA Bureaux, the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and the Executive Committee (EXCOM). Inputs from Member States and MEAs Bureaux on the note are welcome at all times. The Executive Secretary has taken the lead in this exercise.

2. Preparations for the 33rd session of the Executive Body

The Chair informed the Bureau about rearrangements of the agenda items of the session due to the schedule of speakers. He informed the Bureau that he would convene a break-out group on the additional guidance for adjustment applications under the Gothenburg Protocol and related issues. The EU informed the Bureau that it would introduce a room paper at the plenary on this issue.

On item 7 of the meeting agenda 'Future work under the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals', the Bureau discussed the issue of mercury-containing products that would be tabled at the meeting. In particular, it was noted that it might be necessary to consider a possible need for further amendments to the Protocol on Heavy Metals in the light of the developments under the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

In relation to agenda item 7, the Bureau also discussed the future work under the Convention on heavy metals in the light of the upcoming upgrade of the Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues to a task force with additional responsibilities on heavy metals and POPs.

In view of the upcoming elections of officers, the secretariat recalled the number of the nominations received for Chairs of the Executive Body and the Working Group on Strategies and Review and for a member of the Implementation Committee.

3. Implementation of the 2014-2015 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

(a) Recommendation on a new financial mechanism (for effects-related activities) to the Executive Body (item 1.8.4 of the workplan)

The secretariat informed the Bureau that the contributions for effects-oriented work is decreasing, from app. 900,000 US\$ in 2009 to 560,000 US\$ in 2013 and 430,000 US\$ in 2014. The secretariat also informed the Bureau that it had sent kind reminders to 15 Parties that had not paid their 2014 contributions. Parties that are hosting centres did not receive letters. In response to the letter, Austria responded positively that contributions would be made before the end of 2014. In response to a question by the EU with respect to the reasons for the decrease in contributions, the secretariat explained that there were no specific reasons for individual countries. Instead, the decrease was attributable to the general budget cuts in supporting the work of the Convention.

(b) Note on cost estimates of all extrabudgetary items and proposals for possible addition of communication items to the Convention workplan (item 5.3 of the workplan)

The secretariat informed the Bureau that no contributions were received for the note on communication either from the Bureau members or from the Coordinating Group on the promotion of actions towards

implementation of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Coordinating group). The secretariat also informed that it had recently welcomed a new staff who would take up some of the communications and outreach-related tasks, subject to the overall workload of the secretariat.

(c) Report summarizing existing outreach activities with identification of subsidiary bodies engaged and possible additional opportunities (item 5.4.1 of the workplan)

The Bureau discussed opportunities for the Convention to reach out to UNEP, specifically to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and to the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions, and particularly taking into account the resolution on air quality, which was adopted at the first UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in 2014.

4. UNECE activities aimed at promoting the implementation of the LRTAP Convention and its Protocols in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

The Russian Federation introduced a draft workplan of the Coordinating Group for 2015-2016. The secretariat pointed to the necessity of indicating its role of being responsible for the implementation of certain activities listed in the above workplan. The EU suggested deleting the reference to a contribution provided by the EU in item 1.1.1.

Action: The Coordinating Group to revise its workplan in line with the received comments before it is presented to the Executive Body under agenda item 5(d) shifted to Thursday morning.

The EU informed the Bureau of the completion of the Air Quality Governance project, implemented in countries of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and the availability of the final report.

The secretariat provided an update on the recently organised capacity-building activities, in particular the workshops on national emission inventories in Georgia and Azerbaijan, as well as its awareness-raising efforts at the meeting of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development in Central Asia and at the final conference of the EU Air Quality Governance project. The secretariat also shared its plans for activities in 2015.

5. Updates from the Chair and the secretariat

The Chair informed the Bureau about the decision of the CEP to select air quality as one of the two themes at the Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference in Batumi, Georgia, in 2016. The secretariat added that the next stage of the preparations for the conference would be a consultation on draft questions for the ministerial discussions. Comments by Parties can be submitted through CEP national

focal points until 31 December. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the CEP secretariat would give a presentation on the process under item 4 ‘Matters arising from meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other related meetings’ of the agenda. The secretariat noted that the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP) and the Transport Division would also give short presentations under this agenda item.

The EU noted that the Convention’s Scientific Assessment Report could be important to feed into the ministerial conference in 2016. The Chair of the Working Group on Effects (WGE) noted that it would be good to inform the CEP about the Assessment Report.

The Chair also informed the Bureau about the informal meeting of the Chairs of the ECE MEAs, which was held before the CEP meeting at the end October 2014.

The secretariat informed the Bureau about its outreach activities, particularly to the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET). There are ongoing discussions on the expansion of the scope for EANET. The secretariat informed about recent air pollution related activities under the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC). A representative from the EANET network centre in Niigata, Japan, would be giving a presentation under item 9 ‘Activities of bodies of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and international organizations relevant to the Convention’ of the agenda.

6. Other business

The Bureau was informed that some Parties were going to raise a procedural issue regarding amendments to the EMEP protocol as well as an issue related to the report of the Implementation Committee with regard to compliance by the EU with its obligations under the Gothenburg Protocol

In view of the fact that no EB session had been scheduled for 2015, the Chair of WGE noted that the Convention’s bodies should already start looking into the work plan for 2016-2017. In this regard, the Bureau discussed the list of meetings for 2015 and the switch to the new cycle of meetings. It was agreed that the EB Bureau should meet on 23 March, the day before the joint meeting of the Extended Bureaux of the EMEP Steering Body and WGE. In view of article 10 of the Convention which provides that the Executive Body should meet annually, the Bureau agreed that there should be a one day meeting of the EB during the the WGSR meeting in December 2015.

7. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Bureau agreed to have its next meeting on 23 March 2015 in advance of the joint meeting of the Extended Bureaux of the EMEP Steering Body and WGE.