

1 December 2015

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**To Heads of Delegation to the
Working Group on Strategies
And Review and to the Executive Body**

Dear Colleagues,

We have the great pleasure to invite you to participate in the fifty-third session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (WGSR) to be held in Geneva from 15 to 17 December 2015 and the thirty-fourth session of the Executive Body (EB) on 18 December. The back-to-back sessions are scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday and end at 6:00 p.m. Friday. The provisional annotated agendas (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/113 and ECE/EB.AIR/132), other related official as well as informal documents are available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35605#/> (WGSR) and <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38060#/> (EB). The short time for the two groups to hold the annual meetings this year and the number of issues to treat present us with challenging agendas and blurred lines between the WGSR and EB meetings. We hope this letter will help you plan for your participation.

Because of some recent events including a meeting of the Executive Body Bureau in Stockholm, Sweden on November 9th and 10th, we are planning some changes to the WGSR agenda for your consideration. We would like to start the WGSR meeting with a report from the Executive Body (EB) Chair, Ms. Anna Engleryd, outlining the discussions from the Bureau meeting in Stockholm where a number of key issues were discussed including: (1) the scheduling of annual meetings for the subsidiary bodies of the Convention; (2) the financing of scientific work under the Convention; (3) the schedule for the finalization of the Scientific Assessment report; (4) work plans under the Convention and cooperation with other organizations and conventions; and (5) our participation at the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016).

All of these items except for the last one will need to be treated within the WGSR session to allow the EB, meeting only for one day this year, to move more quickly. More details are provided below.

We are planning some changes to the WGSR session agenda to get greater discussion on several of the things the EB will need to act on. Two of the outputs from the Assessment report process

(the Summary for Policy Makers and the Research Needs) are items that need to be discussed within the WGSR session. These items can be found on the website of the First Joint Session of the Steering Body to the EMEP and the Working Group on Effects (WGE) at this link (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=39872#/>). In addition, the WGSR should also discuss the issues that are coming up associated with the financing of effects-based work, the schedule of meetings for bodies under the Convention and the 2016-2017 workplan.

As a result of these changes to the agenda we are suggesting moving any reports from countries on their implementation of the various protocols to occur after the 6 first topics below are discussed within the WGSR:

(1) The scheduling of annual meetings for the subsidiary bodies of the Convention

The original intent of the EB changing the order of meetings of the subsidiary bodies under the Convention was to allow for the science work to be discussed by EMEP and WGE in September each year and then give WGSR possibilities to evaluate and discuss the policy implications of the scientific findings in December and finally provide policy input to the EB in the following Spring. However, we are experiencing difficulties of getting, when needed, a full week for the EB session in Spring. In addition, we are now more aware of the importance of the EB to approve workplans and take certain other actions based on a calendar year in December. The EB Bureau therefore propose to move the annual EB meeting back to December, have the WGSR meeting in Spring and keep the joint EMEP/WGE meeting in September. We propose to add this item to the WGSR agenda.

(2) The financing of Science and effects-based work under the Convention

We are seeing more countries finding themselves in a position to no longer provide funding for some of the science and effects-based work that is core to the Convention. This concerns in particular the voluntary trust fund for the effects work but recently other urgent financing problems have been announced. The latest issues are the announcement that funding for the Task Force for Reactive Nitrogen and the Coordination Center for Effects are being significantly decreased. There is a need to discuss financing in a coordinated way and seek long term solutions with all aspects taken into account. We propose to add this item to the WGSR agenda.

(3) Draft Guidance Document on emission control techniques for mobile sources and Draft Guidelines for estimation and measurement of volatile organic compounds from the Task Force on Techno-Economic Issues (TFTEI)

The Co-Chairs of TFTEI will present for discussion by the WGSR the above two documents. The final drafts of the guidance documents are expected to be submitted for adoption by the Executive Body for the Convention at its thirty-fifth session (Geneva, 2-4 May 2016).

(4) Report from Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen (TFRN) led by Denmark

The Co-Chairs of TFRN will update us on their latest meeting and progress in implementing the workplan for 2014-2015.

(5) Draft Scientific Assessment Report - Summary for policy makers (Draft 3)

This document submitted to the First Joint Session of the Steering Body to the EMEP and the Working Group on Effects in September 2015 will be coming for review and discussion by the WGSR. It is available in English together with an unofficial Russian translation on the WGSR website (see “informal documents” tab). Comments will be accepted on the document until February 12, 2016 so that the document may be finalized and submitted to the Executive Body of the Convention at its thirty-fifth session (Geneva, 2-4 May 2016).

(6) 2016-2017 workplan for the Convention and Cooperation with other organizations and conventions

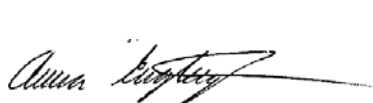
A draft workplan is available and needs discussion and approval for all of the bodies under the Convention. The Executive Body Bureau in Stockholm also discussed the need to be thinking of how items in the workplan link to the Long Term Strategy (LTS) of the Convention. The LTS itself may need to be reviewed and updated, possibly with a longer timeframe beyond 2020. Overall, there was a belief that our interactions with other bodies and conventions should be a logical outgrowth of the LTS. We need to discuss these aspects at the WGSR in preparation for a decision on ways forward at the EB. The LTS was put forward in EB Decision 2010/18 and can be found at the following link:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2010/eb/eb/eb%20decisions/Decision_2010.18.e.pdf

Following the discussion of the 6 items above, WGSR will focus on reports from countries on good practices to strengthen implementation of air-pollution-related policies strategies and measures (agenda item 4 (a)). We will allow time for as many reports as time will permit during the meeting and will share all of the material with all countries. We apologize now if any of the reports cannot be handled within the time frame of the meeting but the above topics are critical to the workings of the Convention and we promise to dedicate significant time at the fifty-fourth WGSR session in December 2016.

The EB will follow its published agenda for its one day session though it may be necessary to make some adjustments depending on discussions within the WGSR. This is a critical time for the Convention to make some key decisions on how to move forward and the Chairs welcome your thoughts and active participation at the upcoming meetings.

Yours sincerely,



Anna Engleryd



William Harnett