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Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Water and Health to the Convention on
the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes

Compliance Committee

Fourteenth meeting

Geneva, 13 and 14 March 2017

Report of the Compliance Committee on its fourteenth meeting

I. Organizational matters

1. The fourteenth meeting of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held on 13 and 14 March 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The following members of the Committee attended: Pierre Chantrel; Ingrid Chorus; Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper (Vice-Chair); Oddvar Georg Lindholm; Vadim Ni; Natalja Sliachtic; Ilya Trombitsky; Jorge Viñuales (Chair) and Serhiy Vykhryst. A representative of the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists attended the meeting as an observer. The meeting was serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat.


II. Election of officers and solemn declaration of new members

2. The Committee elected Mr. Viñuales as Chair and Ms. Kocsis-Kupper as Vice-Chair for 2017–2019.

3. The members of the Committee elected for their first term at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 14–16 November 2016) — Ms. Chorus, Ms. Sliachtic and Mr. Viñuales — signed a solemn declaration that they would perform their functions impartially and conscientiously.

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III. Adoption of the agenda

4. The Compliance Committee adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/C.1/2017/1-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2017/CC/03.¹

IV. Consideration of submissions, referrals and communications

5. The Committee noted that no submissions, referrals or communications had been received prior to the meeting.

V. Follow-up to the decisions of the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session

6. Further to the recommendations in its report to the Meeting of the Parties,² the Committee discussed different follow-up actions as the result of the decisions taken by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session.³

7. In particular, the Committee referred to its note “Interpretation of the provisions of the Protocol on Water and Health related to transboundary waters”.⁴ At its fourth session, the Meeting of the Parties had taken note of the document and had recommended Parties and other States to apply the conclusions of the analysis presented in it. The Committee therefore entrusted its Chair to develop an executive summary for the note, after reviewing the text from an editorial point of view and introducing clarifications, as appropriate. Once finalized, the executive summary would be translated in order to facilitate wider circulation of the outcomes and conclusions of the analysis.

8. The Committee was pleased that the Meeting of the Parties had found the analysis useful and expressed its readiness to perform that interpretive task in the future, should the need arise.

9. The Committee was also informed that, at its seventh meeting (Budapest, 1-2 December 2016), the Implementation Committee under the Water Convention had taken note with appreciation of the Compliance Committee’s analysis and had stressed the important synergies between the Convention and the Protocol.

A. Consultation with Parties to facilitate implementation of the Protocol

10. The Committee discussed the experience under the Consultation Process so far and agreed that the lessons learned in the past triennium should be taken into account when planning possible future consultations. To that end, the Committee considered that it would be useful to receive feedback from Albania, Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the suitability of the process and its usefulness, and it requested the secretariat to liaise with the countries to that effect.

¹ Information and documentation on the meeting and a list of participants are available on a dedicated web page of the ECE website (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43594>).

² ECE/MP.WH/2016/5-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2016/MOP-4/11.

³ The decisions of the Meeting of the Parties can be found in document ECE/MP.WH/13/Add.2-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2016/MOP-4/06/Add.2 (forthcoming).

⁴ The document is available from the web page for the Committee’s thirteenth session (<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41701#/>).

11. Following its decision to consider, based on the outcome of the third reporting cycle, whether to invite another small group of Parties to engage in the Consultation Process,⁵ the Committee discussed the main issues arising from the summary reports submitted by Parties. Intersectoral coordination, public participation and the interaction between the requirements under the Protocol and European Union legislation in the field of water, sanitation and health were identified as the most relevant issues to be taken up in potential consultations in the current triennium.

12. The Committee invited Parties to engage in the Consultation Process regarding the issues identified as most relevant or any other matters pertinent to the Protocol.

13. The Committee further decided that, if no such requests were received within three months, it would revert to the issue and hold an electronic discussion with a view to approaching Parties that were concerned with the issues identified.

14. In selecting Parties that could be approached for potential participation in a consultation, the Committee considered that the previously established criteria, set out in its report to the Meeting of the Parties,⁶ were not meant as eligibility requirements but only as indicative criteria providing broad guidance for selection.

15. As a general matter, given time and resource constraints, the Committee decided that it would be appropriate to limit the number of consultations to not more than three countries in the current triennium.

16. The Committee considered that the format of the Consultation Process might vary depending on country needs and available resources. The Committee itself was open to different levels of engagement with stakeholders, including country visits, as appropriate and if requested by the concerned Parties, subject to the availability of resources.

B. Review of compliance with reporting requirements under the Protocol

17. The Committee next considered the issue of compliance with reporting requirements, noting that all Parties had submitted their summary reports within the third reporting exercise. Subsequently, in accordance with its competence under paragraph 12 of the annex to decision I/2 of the Meeting of the Parties on the review of compliance, the Committee focused on whether the reports revealed other clear and important issues of compliance with the reporting requirements under the Protocol.

18. The Committee concluded that no further action was to be taken at present. It noted, however, the shortcomings of some summary reports, as highlighted in its report to the Meeting of the Parties.⁷

C. Review of compliance with the obligation to set targets and target dates under the Protocol

19. The Committee reviewed the status of target setting under the Protocol and regretted that some Parties had not yet established their national and/or local targets and dates for achieving them. The Committee also recalled decision IV/2 of the Meeting of the Parties,⁸ requesting Parties to communicate their targets to the joint secretariat for wider

⁵ ECE/MP.WH/2016/5-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2016/MOP-4/11, para. 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, paras. 60-83.

⁸ ECE/MP.WH/13/Add.2-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2016/MOP-4/06/Add.2 (forthcoming).

dissemination. The Committee therefore requested the secretariat to contact Parties that had not communicated their targets to ask them to either provide information about their progress with the target-setting processes or to communicate the targets that had been formally established.

20. The Committee decided to take the information provided by Parties into account when exploring whether to approach certain Parties in the context of the Consultation Process.

VI. Promotion of the compliance procedure

21. The Committee discussed concrete steps to raise awareness about the compliance procedure in order to ensure that the information about the mechanism and its functions was easily available to the general public. While the Committee noted the usefulness of the already existing material, it also decided to streamline and unify the messages and to make the available awareness-raising materials more reader-friendly, with support from the secretariat.

22. The Committee also discussed ways of identifying relevant stakeholders and the most appropriate settings to communicate information about the compliance procedure, and agreed to develop a list of relevant organizations and events where awareness-raising efforts could be pursued by the Committee members.

VII. Programme of work and calendar of future meetings

23. The Committee provisionally agreed to hold its fifteenth meeting on 13 and 14 November 2017 and its sixteenth meeting on 16 and 17 April 2018, with the understanding that the meetings might be reduced to one day or called off depending on the expected workload. The meetings would be held in Geneva.

24. The Committee agreed that the issues for consideration at its next meeting would be related to the consultation process and awareness-raising on the compliance procedure, in addition to potential cases of non-compliance.

VIII. Adoption of the report

25. The Committee adopted its report by electronic means after the meeting.
