

Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range
Transboundary Air Pollution

Bureau of the Executive Body

Meeting

Geneva, 10 September 2018

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review), Ms. Laurence Rouil (Chair of the EMEP Steering Body), Ms. Isaura Rabago (Chair of the Working Group on Effects) and Mr. Manfred Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee).

Observers: Mr. Roald Wolters and Ms. Susanne Lindahl (European Union).

Not present: Ms. Katherine Weber (United States of America).

II. Draft provisional agenda for the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body

The Bureau discussed the provisional agenda of the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body (ECE/EB.AIR/141), the organization of the session, the list of documents and the decisions the Executive Body was expected to adopt. It discussed, in particular, preparations for the global event on clean air to be held as informal part of the session.

The Bureau agreed that the distinction between items 8(a) and 8(b) be made clearer in the agenda and that the term “global” be replaced with a view not to give an impression of the Convention going global. The Bureau also agreed that the Chair of the Executive Body chair the informal session. The ultimate objective of organizing such an event would be policy cooperation and the exchange of technical information. Respective proposals for cooperation should be developed by the Chairs of the scientific bodies and the secretariat (for the scientific cooperation) and by the Chair of the Executive Body, the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review, and the Bureau members from Switzerland and the Russian Federation (for policy cooperation). The Bureau noted the budget implications of creating a task force, which would define ways and concrete steps for cooperation and information-sharing. It also noted that there might be limited participation from other regions in case no financial support was provided to cover the travel costs. The Bureau agreed that the

invitations should be sent again targeting organizations and networks, and in case of little interest, the event could be postponed to the next year's anniversary session. It also agreed to provide feedback on the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air document for countries outside the ECE region presented by the Bureau member from Switzerland.

The EU observer flagged an issue of adjustment of emission inventories for historical years raised by a number of EU Member States that may come up during the session. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body noted that the Steering Body would be discussing it later during the week.

The Bureau member from the Russian Federation pointed to a probable contradiction between decision 2013/4 and the Guidelines for reporting emissions and projections data under the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/125) with regard to the list of pollutants to be reported by Parties to the Convention that were not Parties to specific protocols. The Bureau agreed that an explanation was needed for Parties to clarify their obligations.

III. Updates on the fourth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects and the forty-first session of the Implementation Committee

(a) The fourth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

The Chair of WGE informed the Bureau about the main issues on the agenda of the session, which included election of officers, discussion on mandates of the task forces and centres, and joint thematic sessions on ammonia and heavy metals.

The Bureau continued its discussion on the chairmanship of the Task Force on Health. It agreed that the Chair of the Executive Body first discuss the issue with Ms. Jarosinska (WHO) on the margins of the session, then a Party wishing to co-chair the Task Force should be identified, and, thirdly, a letter by the Executive Body Chair or the secretariat be sent to WHO pointing to the increasing importance of the work of the Task Force and suggesting co-chairmanship.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body informed the Bureau about the expected outputs of the work of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution that would be limited to the synthesis report with recommendations and conclusions regarding hemispheric transport readable for policy makers to be supposedly finalized by the end of the year, whereas maintaining the Fast Scenario Screening Tool (TM5-FASST) was problematic in view of the Joint research Centre (JRC) stepping down from the leadership and the lack of financial commitment by US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At the same time, the work of the Task Force would be continued, but the workplan needed to be adapted. The EU observer noted that the Commission had an interest in the work being continued and will assist in looking for solutions.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body noted that she had asked the Co-Chairs of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections (TFEIP) to revise the informal document on reporting the condensable part of air pollutant emissions, so that it had a clear message. The document would be available and posted shortly. The Bureau agreed that a clear message was needed to Parties and that a respective decision should be adopted by the Executive Body in December.

The Chair of WGSR reminded the Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and WGE of the policy discussions at the next session of WGSR and that any technical and scientific information the EMEP Steering Body and WGE might wish to forward to WGSR to support discussions, would be welcome.

(b) The forty-first session of the Implementation Committee

The Chair of the Implementation Committee informed the Bureau about the meetings of the Committee in 2018 and on-going review of compliance of Parties with their emission reduction and reporting obligations. He drew the attention of the Bureau to numerous cases of non-compliance with reporting obligations, in particular with regard to data to be reported on a four-yearly basis. The Bureau agreed that Parties should be reminded of their reporting obligations, so that it becomes clear what is to be reported on mandatory and voluntary basis. A respective informal note prepared by the Implementation Committee would be helpful in this regard.

IV. Draft revised long-term strategy for the Convention

The Chair of WGSR informed the Bureau of the progress in preparing the draft revised strategy after the session of the Working Group in May. The policy review group would finalize the draft in the coming days and make a presentation at the fourth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and WGE. After the consultation with the scientific bodies, the final draft would be circulated among the Bureau members for final comments. The Bureau noted that it would be helpful to have a clean version of the text with highlighted parts for careful reading. The aim is to adopt revised strategy at the 38th session of the Executive Body.

V. Draft revised mandates of task forces and centres under the Convention

The Chair of WGSR presented the mandates of TFRN and TFTEI revised in line with the comments received at the WGSR session and asked the Bureau to provide feedback by the end of the week. The Bureau discussed ways to present the draft mandates including those for task forces and centres under the EMEP SB and WGE at the 38th session of the Executive Body and to adopt them. It agreed to have a separate EB decision per task force/centre and that a paragraph should be added on responsibilities of lead countries. The Bureau member from the Russian Federation noted that national focal points should be informed of the names of experts from the country participating in meetings of task forces. The Bureau tasked the Chairs of the EMEP SB, WGE, WGSR and the secretariat to process further the draft mandates to

ensure their completeness and consistency. The draft mandates will be available as official documents for the 38th session of the EB.

VI. Capacity-building to promote ratification and implementation

The secretariat informed the Bureau of the activities organized in the coming months, notably the high-level awareness-raising events in Ukraine and Georgia. More detailed information on these and other activities would be provided during the joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and WGE.

VII. Outreach and communication

The Bureau discussed preparations to the fortieth anniversary of the Convention. The secretariat informed the Bureau that not many events, which the celebration could be attached to, were scheduled for late 2019 or early 2020. The Executive Body would have to decide at its thirty-eighth session whether the celebration had to take place as part of the thirty-ninth session. An informal document with proposals for celebration and funding needs would be prepared for consideration by the Executive Body.

The secretariat also provided an update on the preparations to the first Global conference on air pollution and health (Geneva, 30 October–1 November 2018) and its side events, speakers from UNECE and the Convention community, noting some difficulties in respective coordination with WHO.

The secretariat further informed the Bureau about its awareness-raising activities in the region, which included participation in a training on the AirQ+ tool in Sarajevo, a workshop co-organized with THE PEP in Almaty and participation in the 2nd COP of the Minamata Convention.

The secretariat presented a proposal for establishment of a national focal point system under the Convention to facilitate communication with Parties on all Convention related issues. The Bureau welcomed the proposal and agreed it was better having one focal point for all Convention related issues (both policy and scientific) per country, who would coordinate internal communication at the country level. It agreed to forward the respective draft decision to the Executive Body for consideration and adoption.

VIII. Other business

The Chair of WGE informed the Bureau of foreseen cooperation with LifeWatch launched in 2017 by the European Commission for researchers and policy makers. The scope of collaboration with LifeWatch would be defined during the fourth joint session and a proposal for a project would be elaborated during next two months.

The secretariat informed the Bureau of the UNOG Strategic Heritage Plan, implementation of which would bring to diminished capacity in terms of conference rooms in 2019-2021.