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Economic Commission for Europe**World Health Organization
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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**Sixteenth meeting**

Geneva, 6 and 7 March 2018

Report of the Compliance Committee on its sixteenth meeting**I. Organizational matters**

1. The sixteenth 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 6 and 7 March 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The following members of the Committee attended: Pierre Chantrel; Ingrid Chorus; Vadim Ni; Natalja Sliachtic; Ilya Trombitsky; Jorge Viñuales (Chair); and Serhiy Vykhryst. The meeting was serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat.
2. The meeting was held back to back with the ninth meeting of the Implementation Committee under the Water Convention (Geneva, 7–9 March 2018). A joint session between both Committees was held on 7 March.

II. Adoption of the agenda

3. The Compliance Committee adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/C.1/2018/1-EUPCR/1611921/2.1/2018/CC/03.

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III. Consideration of submissions, referrals and communications

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

IV. Consultation Process

5. The Chair recalled that at its fifteenth meeting (Geneva, 13–14 November 2017), the Committee had decided that the consultations with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would take place between November 2017 and November 2018 and would have the following components:

- (a) A stocktaking exercise to understand the situation regarding water and health in each country;
- (b) An interpretive note clarifying the relevant legal provisions of the Protocol, based on the information and lessons gathered during the process;
- (c) Provision of specific advice in writing and during the meeting in November;
- (d) Follow-up on the implementation of the advice.

6. The Chair welcomed the delegations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and introduced the format of the consultation, noting that the purpose of the meeting was to understand the situation and the expectations of the three countries. Subsequently, each delegation delivered a presentation on the situation with regard to water and health in their respective countries, including the needs and challenges faced. The Committee then discussed with the delegations how to ensure that the consultations would be as useful and beneficial for them as possible.

7. Following the plenary discussion, three parallel sessions were organized with each Party to discuss specific points arising from the presentations and the information submitted by countries prior to the meeting.

8. The Committee then discussed with the Parties a number of cross-cutting themes that the three countries had mentioned as priorities, namely the target-setting process under the Protocol and its relation to the implementation of the European Union legislation, small-scale water supply and sanitation systems, the organizational structure at the domestic level and financing. The Committee and the Parties agreed that those issues would be addressed in the course of the consultations.

9. With regard to the next steps of the Consultation Process, the Committee requested the Parties concerned to revert in writing to the Committee by 30 April 2018 with a detailed statement on their expectations from the Consultation Process. The Committee also recommended that the Parties:

- (a) Attend two forthcoming relevant events under the Protocol, namely the tenth meeting of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (Geneva, 24–25 April 2018) and a subregional workshop on improving small-scale water supplies for better health (Dessau, Germany, 18–20 June 2018);
- (b) Use the relevant policy and technical guidance materials developed under the Protocol that tackled some of the issues identified by Parties as priorities for action;
- (c) Further exchange with each other in order to allow the cross-fertilization of ideas and the sharing of good practices with respect to the issues discussed during the session.

10. The Committee then agreed on the distribution of responsibilities among its members with regard to the next steps of the Consultation Process.

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

11. The Chair recalled that at its fifteenth meeting the Committee had decided to write to Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal and the Russian Federation with a request to provide further information on their target-setting processes.

12. The Committee noted the replies received from Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Portugal prior to its sixteenth meeting stating that the three Parties were at the final stage of their target setting processes. It therefore decided to review the situation of those Parties within the fourth reporting cycle under the Protocol.

13. The Committee further noted with respect to Albania, Belgium and the Russian Federation that it would wait for the replies from those countries until 30 May 2018 and would then revisit the issue of possible follow-up actions through electronic consultations by email, as necessary.

14. Subsequently, the secretariat briefed the Committee on the ongoing development by the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting of a practical guide on the joint implementation of the Protocol and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that relation, the Committee considered that the interpretive note that was being developed in the context of the Consultation Process clarifying the relevant legal provisions of the Protocol might be relevant also for the drafting of the practical guide. It therefore decided to share the note as soon as practicable with the Task Force. The Committee also welcomed the opportunity to review and comment on the draft document.

VI. Awareness-raising on the compliance procedure

15. The Chair briefed the Committee on the awareness-raising activities carried out in the intersessional period. He highlighted that efforts were being made to explore synergies with the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, referring in particular to the forthcoming joint event with representatives of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee, the Human Rights Committee and the Compliance Committee under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) (Geneva, 15 March 2018), as well as a special session “Engaging with International Mechanisms to Realize the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation”, that was being jointly organized by ECE with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation (Brasilia, 22 March 2018).

16. At its fifteenth meeting, the Committee had adopted the text of a summary guide for the submission of communications from the public. Among concrete steps to raise awareness about the compliance procedure and ensure that information was easily available to the public, the Committee had requested that the guide be shortened and laid out in a reader-friendly format. The Committee took note of the newly formatted guide and requested the secretariat to make it available on the Committee’s website. It further decided to circulate the formatted summary to the relevant non-governmental organizations, highlighting that the fourth reporting cycle starting in November 2018 would provide up-to-date information on the setting, monitoring and implementation of targets under the Protocol.

17. The Committee encouraged all its members to intensify efforts in their respective countries and other activities to raise awareness on the Protocol and its procedures and requested them to report back to the Committee in that regard at the next meeting.

18. The Committee decided to further explore synergies with the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development.

VII. Programme of work and calendar of future meetings

19. The Committee provisionally agreed to hold its seventeenth meeting on 5 and 6 November 2018, back to back with the eleventh meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, 7–8 November 2018), and its eighteenth meeting on 24 and 25 June 2019, back to back with the twelfth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, 26–27 June 2019).

20. The Committee agreed that the issues for consideration at its next meeting would be related to the Consultation Process, awareness-raising on the compliance procedure and matters relating to compliance, as appropriate.

VIII. Joint session with the Implementation Committee

21. A joint session with the Implementation Committee under the Water Convention consisted of two segments: a closed session for the two committees; and a public event open to participation by civil society and members of other relevant implementation and compliance bodies.

22. During its closed session, the two committees exchanged views and experiences on various matters of common interest. Topics covered in the closed session included consideration of how national reports were analysed by each of the committees; the promotion of both committees, especially among non-governmental organizations, and opportunities for their joint promotion; and experiences in the implementation of the advisory, interpretative and consultative functions of the committees. The committee members welcomed the opportunity to exchange views and agreed to explore further opportunities to hold joint events on matters of common interest.

23. The public event was organized as a round-table discussion on the role of non-State actors in supporting implementation of and compliance with multilateral environmental and human rights agreements. The round table was chaired by Mr. Attila Tanzi, Chair of Implementation Committee under the Water Convention. Participants included Mr. Jonas Ebbesson, Chair of the Compliance Committee under the Aarhus Convention; Ms. Juliette Kohler and Ms. Amélie Taoufiq-Cailliau of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions at the United Nations Environment Programme; Mr. Viñuales, Chair of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health; and Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, member of the Implementation Committee under the Water Convention.

24. After an introduction by the Chair, the members of the round table provided an overview of their respective Committee's composition, function and mandate. That was followed by a further round of discussion that explored how non-governmental organizations have been, or could be, better engaged in the work of the committees. The discussion was then opened to the audience. Several representatives of non-governmental organizations, including Earthjustice and the Centre for International Environmental Law, complimented the committees on their initiative to organize the round table, and stressed the critical importance of continuing the dialogue between non-governmental organizations and bodies established under multilateral environmental agreements and human rights instruments as an important means to monitor and foster compliance and implementation.

IX. Adoption of the report

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