

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Bureau of the Executive Body

Meeting

Geneva, 10 December 2018

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Katherine Weber (United States of America), 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: Ms. Susanne Lindahl (European Union).

II. Preparations 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.

(a) *Review of the implementation of the 2018-2019 workplan: Science*

The Chair of the Steering Body to EMEP informed the Bureau on the progress in the EMEP monitoring strategy revision and its expected adoption in September 2019.

She provided background information on the case of adjustment application by Spain brought to the attention of the Executive Body by the EMEP Steering Body at its last session, pointing to an issue of legal interpretation of decision 2012/3 on adjustments under the Gothenburg Protocol, decision 2012/12 on guidance for adjustments and amending it decision 2014/1 on improving the guidance for adjustments. Although the case concerned the situation in the past, that could have implications for possible similar cases in the future. The Bureau agreed that the focus of the Implementation Committee should be forward-leaning, and that the ad hoc group of legal experts could be tasked with drafting a consolidated decision for adoption at the next session of the Executive Body. The view was expressed that, in the meantime, the case should not be referred to the Implementation Committee.

Concerning the work of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution, the Chair of the Steering Body to EMEP informed the Bureau that the United States would continue to co-chair the Task Force with less resources allocated for that. There was no solution found at that moment for another co-chair in view of withdrawal of the European Union. The Chair of the Executive Body noted that the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) showed its interest in this regard, however, it had concerns in view of its limited resources and the broad mandate of the Task Force. Representatives of Switzerland and the Russian Federation had reservations about a sister organization co-leading this work under the Convention. The Bureau agreed that discussions with AMAP had to be continued, however, preference should be given to Parties to lead the work of the Task Force, and that the Executive Body at its session should urge Parties to come forward.

The Bureau agreed that an amendment to the current workplan should be made to include the tasks of CCE in 2019 – their list could be included in the report of the session.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects informed the Bureau on the cooperation with LifeWatch ERIC noting that the delay in the start of the work had been caused by administrative issues. She further informed that ICPs would need to participate in the call for action in 2019 and then the related tasks could also be included in the workplan. A representative of the secretariat explained that the following steps had to be made to start formally the collaboration: (a) an exchange of letters made between the Chair of the Executive Body and LifeWatch ERIC; and (b) a Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNECE and LifeWatch ERIC. The Bureau agreed that the Executive Body could endorse these formal arrangements.

(b) Review of the implementation of the 2018-2019 workplan: Policy

The Bureau agreed that a presentation by Rob Maas on the outcomes of the Saltjobaden VI workshop should precede the presentation by the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review. It also agreed that a presentation by the Co-Chair of TFIAM on the establishment of an expert panel on clean air in cities would be covered under this agenda item.

The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review presented the issues forwarded by the Working Group for consideration by the Executive Body. These included some changes to be introduced to the workplan. Several Bureau members suggested that a revised workplan could be produced after the session for easier reference.

(c) Review of the implementation of the 2018-2019 workplan: Compliance

The Bureau discussed the issue of the Implementation Committee seeking clarification from the Executive Body as to whether the Committee's mandate should be expanded to include the review of compliance by Parties to the Convention with the exchange of available information under article 8 of the Convention. The Bureau agreed that the Committee should continue working under the current mandate, whereas Parties had to be urged to report data with an understanding that they were

doing it on a voluntary basis. The review of the Committee's mandate could be done at a later stage, to include, among others, the issue of transition between the "old" and "new" protocols.

(d) Revised long-term strategy for the Convention

The Bureau members agreed that there were no obstacles for the long-term strategy to get adopted at the session with some changes. Although the implementation of the strategy would start in 2020, the direction and the new vision would support policy discussions in 2019 and the next workplan planning.

(e) Proposed revised mandates

The Bureau discussed the way forward with the draft revised mandates of task forces and scientific centres. It agreed that the revised mandates of TFTEI and TFRN were ready for adoption with minor changes, whereas the revised mandates of the EMEP and WGE task forces and centres (except for CCE, HTAP and JEG) could be provisionally approved with a view to adopt them formally at the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body. A message would be sent to co-chairs of scientific task forces and centres, so that they use these mandates as a roadmap in the meantime. The Executive Body would need to note that CCE would continue to operate under its current mandate.

(f) Financial requirements of the Convention

The secretariat presented the decisions expected to be taken by the Executive Body with regard to financial requirements. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body informed the Bureau that instead of preparing an informal document, she would make a presentation at the session on the review of the EMEP budget with a question on whether the budget distribution between the centres had to be re-discussed. The Bureau agreed that it would be preferable for the Executive Body to task the EMEP Steering Body with making analysis of the current use of the budget and the need for an increase and reporting back to the Executive Body at its thirty-ninth session. The new tasks deriving from the revised mandates and the long-term strategy should be included in this analysis. The Working Group on Effects should consider the proposal from Sweden concerning JEG and report back to the Executive Body in 2019.

(g) Communication and outreach

The secretariat presented the options for celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Convention in 2019, as contained in informal doc. no.7 for the Executive Body session. The Bureau discussed the proposed options, including the idea of having a special segment for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Bureau agreed that the Parties should be invited to contribute. The Bureau member from the United States confirmed that in-kind contributions were possible, and noted that the Party would consider providing its contribution to the secretariat to produce a brochure.

(h) Election of officers

The secretariat provided information on the submitted nominations. The Bureau member from the Russian Federation noted that his nomination would also be submitted shortly.

III. Preparations for the event on clean air globally

The secretariat informed the Bureau about the updates in the programme of the event and its attendance list, as well as the proposals for scientific and policy cooperation shared in advance of the event. The Bureau discussed the expected outputs, such as establishment of a forum for collaboration on reducing air pollution. The proposal could be discussed at the WGSR session with a possible launch at the Executive Body session in December 2019. The Bureau agreed that it should be clear that the Parties were not opening the Convention or intending to start a costly initiative but were aiming to build on cooperation with existing networks and organizations.

IV. Date, time and place for the next meeting

The Bureau decided¹ to have its next meeting in the afternoon on 20 May 2019, prior to the 57th session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (21-24 May 2019).

¹ After its meeting on 10 December 2018, the Bureau decided to have the next one on 18-19 March 2019 in Laxenburg, Austria, to be hosted by CIAM/IIASA on the margins of the meeting of the Extended Bureaux of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects.