

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Bureau of the Executive Body

Meeting

Laxenburg, Austria, 18-19 March 2019

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), 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: Ms. Susanne Lindahl (European Union).

Not present: Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Ms. Katherine Weber (United States of America).

II. Preparations for the joint meeting of the Extended Bureau of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

The Chairs of the Working Group on Effects and of the Steering Body to EMEP informed about the main issues on the agenda of the joint meeting of the WGE/EMEP Extended Bureaux on 19-21 March 2019. The Chair of the Working Group on Effects updated about the call for proposals for funding under LifeWatch ERIC. She expressed disappointment that the call had not been published yet (there is already a few months delay) but stressed the need for the WGE community - ICPs in particular - to continue discussions and cooperation on items relevant for the call such as the use of blockchain techniques and tools in the management of huge datasets under the Convention. She informed about recent developments and a forthcoming presentation by the new team of CCE at UBA, Germany and discussions on the CCE mandate and its future collaboration with the ICP Modelling and Mapping (also with a new Chair) and other ICPs. The Bureaux would also discuss the need for producing a set of official critical load (CL) exceedance maps which should be produced periodically and be available at the WGE portal. The CL and related deposition maps are major tools under the Convention in scenario development and policy-making. The CL exceedance maps are important environmental indicators, for scientific use by other groups and for communication purposes. A process for producing these maps would be proposed by CCE and would be included in the 2020-2021 workplan. It would require close cooperation between EMEP and WGE as well as regular delivery of relevant data by the Parties.

She noted that a stronger participation of scientists from EECCA countries in the work of the ICPs would be welcome, but a major obstacle is the lack of funding for participation of experts in ICP related meetings. The Bureau requested the secretariat to explore which areas of work are of greater interest to EECCA countries, as well as opportunities for funding EECCA participants. The issue of translation of the report from the fourth joint session of EMEP Steering Body/WGE as well as the pre-session documents prepared by the ICPs was also raised. The secretariat recalled the decision that only a joint report with key scientific messages from WGE and EMEP and up to three thematic reports could be submitted for translation for the annual joint session. The secretariat further explained that the report on the fourth joint of September 2018 was not yet submitted for translation due to a prolonged absence of an editor (until March 2019) at the UNECE Environment Division. The Bureau noted the importance for the Convention of the work carried out by the Joint Expert Group on Dynamic Modelling (JEG DM) with a strong and long-term support from Sweden. The proposed transformation of JEG DM into a new WGE centre would enable a continued support by Sweden and would open opportunities for attracting additional resources for dynamic modelling work, including through LifeWatch funding. The Extended WGE/EMEP Bureau would discuss the elements of JEG DM mandate and its scope of work including its cooperation with the new CEE and other WGE task forces and centres and with EMEP.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body drew attention to the draft updated EMEP monitoring strategy – to be distributed in the following week - stressing its potential to contribute to stronger links between the scales (global, regional to local), with other issues (climate change) and networks (Global Earth Observation System of Systems - GEOSS, EU's Copernicus). She also noted the necessary coordination with the monitoring activities under the Working Group on Effects and the European Union Ambient Air Quality Directive, and the collaboration with the EU ACTRIS project and with WMO on quality assurance/quality control issues. She stressed that while EU would rather focus on the very high level of monitoring, EMEP concentrates on enlarging level 1 monitoring. The draft monitoring strategy would be presented as an official document at the fifth joint session of EMEP/WGE in September 2019 with a view to submitting it to Executive Body for consideration and approval at its thirty-ninth session of the in December 2019. She stressed the importance of collaboration with AMAP and with EU black carbon action for the Arctic in the context of the forthcoming discussion on the review of the Gothenburg Protocol. She recalled the long-term objective of having mandatory reporting on black carbon emissions.

She informed the ongoing close collaboration of the Convention with the EU on emission reporting and review processes. The aim is to ensure as much consistency between the two processes as feasible. The Convention can focus more on the EECCA countries rather than on EU countries. Also, the review of adjustment applications should be harmonized to the extent possible. With respect to historical data for which we have adjustment applications in situations where compliance is achieved, there is not much sense to review historical compliance. After discussion at the joint session of EMEP SB/WGE, there may be a recommendation to the Executive Body to decide that there is no need for adjustment applications – for historical cases - if compliance is already achieved.

In 2019, Parties are required to report on the way how they account for condensables in their national inventories, especially in PM_{2.5} data. CEIP will present the relevant information. Atmospheric models indicate missing PM component (not accounted for in the inventories) especially in winter time. The treatment of condensables in the inventories may affect the PM_{2.5} reduction commitments. The discussion on this issue needs to continue in view of its policy relevance.

She informed about the expression of interest and the nomination of co-chairs for the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution (TF HTAP) by Poland, Canada, and Germany. The Bureau stressed the importance of TF HTAP for the Convention including its role in the outreach beyond UNECE region and welcomed the expressions of interest. The decisions about organization of the HTAP work will be done the Executive Body at the recommendations of the EMEP Steering Body. The Bureau requested the secretariat to remind Parties of the commitments associated with co-leading and co-chairing Convention task forces.

The Bureau recalled decision 2018/4 on the designation of focal points and requested that invitations to meetings of task forces be copied to focal points. The secretariat informed that the invitations are sent by the chairs of the Task Force. It would consider how to relay this information to the focal points.

The Bureau recalled the request by the Executive Body to the ad hoc group of legal experts for clarification with respect to decision 2014/1 amending decision 2012/12. The secretariat informed that there was a new chair nominated by the UK and that it had forwarded the request of the Executive Body. The Bureau noted the importance of this clarification and its availability into the official languages of the Convention for the 39th session of the Executive Body. In view of this, it stressed the importance of its timely preparation and submission for translation. It requested to have an update on progress at its meeting in May.

III. Preparations for the forty-second meeting of the Implementation Committee

The Chair of the Implementation Committee informed the Bureau about the main issues in the agenda of the forty-second session of the Implementation Committee (Stockholm, 7-9 May 2019). These included consideration of at least nine cases of compliance with emission reduction obligations, discussion on the outcomes of the 38th session of the Executive Body and other issues. Two Parties concerned agreed to participate in the meeting to provide additional information with respect to their cases.

The Bureau recalled that the Executive Body requested the Committee to continue to review compliance by Parties with their reporting obligations in line with the current mandate, and that it agreed to revisit the mandate of the Committee during the 2020-2021 workplan cycle. At the same time, the Bureau noted the need for a decision on reviewing compliance with the obligations under the latest protocols during the transition period upon the entry of into force of their amendments. The Bureau requested the secretariat to propose a text for such a decision of the Executive Body to be taken at its session in December 2019.

IV. Preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review

The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review informed the Bureau about the main issues in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the Working Group (21-24 May 2019) (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/121), related pre-session documents and the preparatory work undertaken. She particularly mentioned preparations for the combined workshop to be held under workplan items 2.2 and 5.3.5 (agenda item 7), the policy discussions to inform any future review of the Gothenburg Protocol (agenda item 4) and elements to be included in the policy section of the draft 2020-2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention (agenda item 5).

With respect to the policy discussions, the Bureau agreed that Parties should have flexibility in terms of the deadline for submitting their views and that countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia should be encouraged to provide their input - the upcoming BAT workshop in Berlin could be seen as an opportunity for them to prepare such a submission.

Concerning the organization of the combined workshop, the Bureau stressed the need for financial support for participants from outside the region. It was noted that there should be a balance found in terms of the number of speakers to allocate sufficient time for discussion.

The Bureau supported the proposal by the Chair of WGSR to include in the 2020-2021 an item on discussions of control strategies for the use by TFHTAP in future scenarios, following the recommendation by the policy review group.

The Bureau member from Switzerland acknowledged that the code of good practice for solid fuel burning and small combustion installations (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2019/4) prepared by TFTEI was an excellent document showcasing the advanced technology solutions. He further noted that it would be good to also develop a document describing basic solutions for countries with less advanced technologies in this sector.

V. Implementation of the 2018-2019 workplan for the implementation of the Convention and related follow-up to the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body

A. Forum for cooperation with other regional networks and agreements

The Bureau took note of the “Next steps for setting up a forum for global cooperation on air pollution” prepared by the Chair of the Executive Body supported by other members of the Bureau and Kimber Scavo – the chair of the Policy Review Group. The Bureau discussed various aspects of current and planned cooperation with other regional networks and agreements outside the ECE region. The forum for global cooperation on air pollution – to be launched during the 40th anniversary celebration - is expected to include cooperation on scientific, technical and policy related issues. Parties might also use the forum to share their experiences with bi- and multilateral efforts and with capacity building and awareness raising activities. The secretariat will explore possibilities for translation into Spanish (for the benefit of Latin American

countries) of relevant documents developed under the Convention (e.g. guidance documents under the Gothenburg, HMs and POPs Protocols, EMEP/EEA guidebook and guidelines for emission reporting). The issue of whether the forum should have a mandate (terms of reference) as well as the need for a decision by the Executive Body concerning the forum and the Convention's relation to it was raised. It was noted that the forum will not be part of the formal structure of the Convention. The Bureau agreed to continue its discussion on these issues at its meeting and decide on the way forward. The secretariat informed the Bureau that it had set up a webpage on international cooperation to reduce air pollution on the UNECE website. The webpage will be expanded further.

The Bureau requested the Chair of the Executive Body supported by Bureau members from Canada and Switzerland and by Ms. Scavo to form a core group to in close collaboration with the EB Bureau work for the launch of the Forum and report on the progress at the next Bureau meeting prior to the 57th session of the WGSR.

B. 40th anniversary celebration

The Secretariat updated the EB Bureau on the preparations to the 39th session of the Executive Body in December 2019 and introduced the note "Proposals for celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Convention in 2019". The celebration will include the following items: (i) a simulation exercise for emerging leaders in the field of air quality; (ii) special session to mark the 40th anniversary including a global event and a segment involving high-level representatives; (iii) lunch reception and a ceremony. The secretariat prepares various communication and promotional materials (leaflets, brochure and video). A draft programme for the 40th anniversary special session was presented with two different options for the timing of the session. The Bureau decided to choose a modified option A with 3 sessions during the first day (11 Dec 2019): Looking back and ahead – 40 years, progress, and visions for the future; Progress in the EECCA region; and the Launch of the global forum and high-level discussion. The fourth session on the following day (12 Dec 2019) will focus on Connecting the dots: learning best practices from each other.

The Bureau discussed the possibility of high-level representation at the celebration and concluded that Parties should be invited to be represented at high level. The Bureau requested the secretariat to send out invitations to Parties for the celebration encouraging high-level representation.

The Bureau took note of the proposed updated budget for the celebration (US\$ 120,700 +13% Programme Support Cost, totalling US\$ 135,691) noting that the secretariat already received payments/pledges exceeding US\$ 70'000 (Norway, Finland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Nordic Council of Ministers, Croatia and Sweden)¹ in response to the call for contribution issued following the request of the Executive Body. The note on the celebration including the draft programme and budget would be available as an informal document for the 57th session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review on its website².

¹ Recent pledges were made by Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

² <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50342>

C. Draft Ministerial Declaration

The Bureau took note of the “Elements for communication on CLRTAP” prepared by the Bureau Member from Switzerland, which included selected elements of the Long-term Strategy (LTS) adopted by the Executive Body at its 38th session. The Bureau agreed to use the note as a basis for preparing a 1-page declaration that could be endorsed during the high-level discussion at the 40th anniversary celebration. The draft declaration is expected to be non-controversial being based on the recently approved LTS. The Bureau requested the secretariat to draft the declaration and circulate it among the Bureau members. Once agreed by the Bureau, the draft declaration would be made available for comments by Parties (at the WGSR 57th session website).

VI. Capacity-building activities

The secretariat provided an update on capacity-building activities to be carried out in 2019, in particular, the "Workshop to promote ratification of the protocols to the Convention in the EECCA region" to be held on 14-16 May in Berlin, organized jointly by the TFTEI and the Government of Germany in cooperation with the secretariat. The workshop aims to update and further improve understanding on the concept of BATs, their application in various industrial sectors, to exchange knowledge and experience on BATs approaches adopted in different parts of the UNECE region and to discuss obstacles and ways forward that would allow further improvement of air quality and enhance the ratification and implementation of the Protocols to the Convention.

The secretariat referred to the high-level awareness-raising meetings to be held back-to-back with the roundtables on legislative analysis in Armenia and Azerbaijan this year. It noted that the purpose of the event is to raise the political profile of the Convention and increase awareness of the benefits of accession to its Protocols; to further assist Azerbaijan and Armenia in aligning national legislation with the provisions of the protocols and developing National Action Plan for ratification. The secretariat stressed the importance of the participation of Bureau members in these events, as well as the high-level participation from ECE in order to reinforce the discussion.

The secretariat also referred to the workshops on emission inventories to be organized in Armenia and Azerbaijan to assist countries in further improving and maintaining reporting on emissions under the Convention.

The secretariat informed the Bureau about the new contracts with the European Union and the Russian Federation (continuation of previous projects - phase II) on capacity-building activities to support the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its Protocols in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It noted that the budget for both projects had been significantly decreased compared to previous projects, as well as reduction of duration of the project funded by the Russian Federation. It also mentioned and thanked other donor parties, in particular, Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, for providing support in this aspect.

The Bureau stressed the importance of capacity building activities that should meet the needs expressed by countries and noted that other ongoing bilateral projects in some of these countries also contribute to capacity building for the implementation of the Convention.

VII. Other business

The Bureau member from Canada informed about Canada's intention to propose amendments to the Convention Rules of Procedure for the consideration by the Executive Body at its 39th session.

The Chair informed about the strengthened contacts and coordination between chairs of main subsidiary bodies and representatives of the EU Commission and EU presidency by holding regular monthly calls (every first Friday of the month). Notes of these calls will be circulated to the Bureau.

VIII. Date, time and place for the next meeting

The Bureau decided 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).