

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Bureau of the Executive Body

Meeting

Geneva, 9 September 2019

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Elizabeth Nichols (United States of America), 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: Ms. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review).

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

The Director of the ECE Environment Division made an introductory remark highlighting the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Convention as an important opportunity to raise awareness about the Convention at the high political level in addition to the efforts already being made in this regard.

The Bureau discussed the provisional agenda of the thirty-ninth session of the Executive Body (ECE/EB.AIR/143), the organization of the session, which would this year include the 40th anniversary special session, the list of documents and the decisions the Executive Body was expected to adopt.

With respect to item 4 of the provisional agenda, the Bureau asked the secretariat to send a query to Parties about their progress in accepting amendments to the Protocol on Heavy Metals and the Protocol on POPs reminding them of the two Executive Body decisions adopting the amendments under the Protocol on POPs.

The Bureau member from the United States informed the Bureau about its proposal to amend article 3bis and annex VII to the amended Gothenburg Protocol. The Bureau agreed that the draft decisions on the proposed amendments should be included in a pre-session document and that the text could be drafted by the secretariat in consultation with Bureau members.

Under the agenda item on the implementation of the workplan, its part on science, the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body noted that she was expecting a smooth adoption of the updated EMEP monitoring strategy. The Bureau noted that in case a clear recommendation by the Working Group on Effects was made on transforming the Joint Expert Group into a centre, it could be highlighted in the provisional agenda.

The Bureau recalled that a note on reviewing adjustment applications was still going to be received from the ad hoc group of legal experts following the request by the Executive Body. The Bureau agreed to consider it at its next meeting.

The Bureau discussed the draft decision on reviewing compliance with the obligations under the Gothenburg Protocol following the entry into force of the amendments. A representative of the European Union explained the changes proposed to the text of the draft decision. The Bureau agreed with the revised text noting that the issue of prioritization for the compliance review could be discussed during 2020-2021 as part of the process of revision of the mandate of the Implementation Committee.

Mindful of the entry into force of amendments to the Gothenburg Protocol, the Bureau agreed that the Executive Body would initiate the review of the revised Protocol based on the recommendations of the Working Group on Strategies and Review made at its last session and those of other subsidiary bodies. The Bureau noted that the Executive Body would have to task the Working Group on Strategies and Review with the development of the scope, the content and procedure of the review. The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review would propose the initial draft of the respective EB decision. The Bureau noted that the Executive Body could also task the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling and its centre to make model runs for 2030-2040 with a scenario of all annexes to the Protocol being implemented and then the results of it could be used as background information. The Chair of the Executive Body suggested to prepare a proposal to clarify the process to Parties.

For the compliance part of the workplan, the Chair of the Implementation Committee asked the secretariat to include a presentation by Latvia in the annotation.

The secretariat informed the Bureau that for the capacity-building and outreach parts of the workplan, a brochure containing information on the progress made and an informal document with an update would be made available to Parties.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects and the secretariat noted with regard to the draft mandates of the WGE centres and task forces, provisionally adopted by the Executive Body last year, that there would be changes introduced in the chapeau text to reflect the links between task forces and ICPs.

As for the draft mandate of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution, the Bureau agreed with the text proposed by the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body, which added more emphasis on POPs and mercury and acknowledged contribution of the lead countries, understanding that the final mandate remains to be approved at the upcoming Executive Body meeting.

The Bureau asked the secretariat to draft a decision on further action with respect to the forum for international cooperation on air pollution. The Bureau member from the

Russian Federation noted that it would be good to have a dedicated section on the Convention's website.

The secretariat provided an update on preparations to the anniversary special session encouraging Bureau members to reach out to potential speakers from their respective authorities for the high-level segment and to explore possibility to bring younger colleagues to participate in the negotiation simulation game. It also mentioned a briefing organized on 17 September for permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva to further promote the anniversary celebration event. The Bureau discussed the organization of panel discussions and roundtables. It agreed that the interest of AMAP to present the work of the European Union on black carbon could be supported and a side event could be organized at lunchtime on 12 December. The Bureau agreed to further send to the secretariat the names of prominent persons by the end of the day and that an acknowledgment of their contribution could be made during the evening reception.

The Bureau discussed the draft declaration. It agreed that it should be named as 40th anniversary declaration, as giving it a ministerial status would create procedural obstacles. It further agreed that the declaration would be endorsed during the celebration session, and then adopted by the Executive Body.

III. Updates on the fifth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body informed the Bureau of the main EMEP related issues in the agenda of the session, which included the discussion between the modellers and the emission community on the condensable part of particulate matter. The objective was to urge Parties to report the condensable part and to update the reporting guidelines accordingly. However, as this might have implications for compliance, the issue would also need to be further discussed at the policy level next year. The Bureau member from Switzerland noted that there was a need to inform experts preparing inventories in advance, so that they could produce data on time.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects informed the Bureau of the main issues in the agenda related to effects-oriented activities. These included, among others, the discussion on mandates, financial and budgetary issues, and the proposal to transform the Joint Expert Group on Dynamic Modelling into a programme centre. The Chair of WGE pointed out that the decision on the LifeWatch project proposals would be announced in November-December 2019, and that the WGE would have to decide on how to reflect possible LifeWatch activities in the 2020-2021 workplan.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body further informed the Bureau that the joint thematic sessions would be devoted to nitrogen and black carbon. The objective would be to stimulate scientific discussion with possible recommendations for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol.

The Chair of the Executive Body noted that she would include information on the forum for international cooperation in her presentation during the joint session.

IV. Preparation of the 2020-2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

The secretariat presented the draft 2020-2021 workplan it compiled on the basis of inputs received from subsidiary bodies. It pointed to some overlaps with mandates of task forces in the science part. The secretariat also noted that the list of official meetings in 2020-2021 would be attached to the workplan for approval by the Executive Body, whereas the list of official documents in 2020-2021 would be included in an informal document. The document would undergo official editing, and information on funding would need to be harmonized.

The representative of the European Union suggested that the information in the part on capacity-building not duplicate the work done by the European Union in the Balkan countries and that the information under workplan item 1.3.3 be corrected.

V. Forum for international cooperation on air pollution

The Chair of the Executive Body presented the revised concept note for the forum noting that it would be shared with delegations present at the especial session in December 2018 and other partners. She encouraged to avoid a formalistic approach and noted that the document would be discussed further. The Chair informed the Bureau members that two countries had shown interest in contributing to and possibly lead the Forum but that no decision was taken yet, and that Argentina had expressed its interest in hosting the first meeting.

VI. Capacity-building activities

The secretariat informed the Bureau of its planned capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, which included high-level meetings and roundtables to present the results of the analysis of national legislation and workshops on emission inventories in Armenia and Azerbaijan in September - October 2019.

VII. Overview of secretariat resources

The secretary to the Convention made an overview of the current resources available for providing secretariat services to the Convention. She noted the shift in functions within the secretariat and the growing need for legal support to ensure legal consistency of all decisions, protocols and other documents and coherence in servicing of the intergovernmental bodies. The secretariat would further provide an estimation of the funding needs for the legal support post. The Director of the Environment Division referred to the experience of the secretariats of other ECE Conventions. The secretariat further noted that the funding needs to cover three posts for capacity-building, awareness-raising and outreach activities under the Convention were already included in the workplan and the financial document accordingly.

The Bureau recognized the need for legal advice from the secretariat referring to experience in other Conventions but asked for clarifications regarding the options and

possible solutions within existing structures including possibility of more efficient cooperation with other ECE Conventions. It asked the secretariat to prepare a more detailed proposal with a clear explanation/justification to be provided to Parties. It suggested that the possibility of including the post in the list of activities covered by voluntary contributions should be explored.

VIII. Date, time and place for the next meeting

The next meeting of the Bureau is scheduled for 9 December 2019 (8:00- 9:50), before the session of the Executive Body. The informal Bureau meeting, organized by the Chair in Stockholm, will start on 16 October at 9:30 and finish on 17 October 2019 at around 16:00.