



**PRTR Protocol to the Aarhus Convention  
3rd Meeting of the Working Group of the Parties  
(Geneva, 20-21 November 2013)  
- Position by the EU and its Member States -**

**Item 4. Promotion and capacity-building**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the secretariat and the Bureau for efforts in promoting and implementing the Protocol, providing technical assistance, as well as preparing related documents.

We acknowledge the progress made in providing technical assistance through existing mechanisms and particularly the effort put into strengthening synergies with other instruments, bodies and organisations. We encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this respect.

**Item 4(a) – Synergies with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe multilateral environmental agreements and other partners**

The EU and its Member States believe that synergies with other organisations and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) are very important, since they enhance public access to information on global environmental issues and facilitate public participation in environmental decision-making.

We believe that the joint global round table organised by the secretariat of the UNECE Protocol on PRTRs and the OECD in cooperation with UNITAR represents not only a great opportunity to share both successes and challenges in implementing the PRTR Protocol, but also an opportunity to identify problematic areas and to set guidelines for future actions towards the implementation of PRTRs.

#### Item 4(b) – Subregional workshops

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the secretariat for preparing the report on the subregional workshop “Get Your Right to a Healthy Community” on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers in South-Eastern Europe that took place in Sarajevo on 28 and 29 May 2013. This report provides information on the challenges to PRTR development faced by these countries, and identifies the solutions needed for accession to the Protocol by countries of the subregion. We believe that the outcomes from the workshop will be very valuable in the ongoing development of PRTRs.

#### Item 4(c) – Provision of technical assistance

The EU and its Member States would like to thank Belarus and Armenia for their draft proposal on activities for promotion of the PRTR Protocol in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

We acknowledge the efforts made and welcome the steps taken so far. The current draft proposal is wide-ranging and should be developed further to enable detailed discussion. This would involve specifying each of the proposed activities, including the identification of possible outcomes of the events and the costs of each activity. The structure of the work programme of the Protocol (document ECE.MP.PRTR.WG.1.2013.10) could be taken as an example for further work in this direction.

The proposal should also specify what the gaps are in relation to having a fully functioning PRTR system within each country jurisdiction covered.

Furthermore, paragraphs 273 and 277 of the Rio+20 outcome document “*The future we want*”<sup>1</sup> seem relevant. We expect that the report of the intergovernmental preparatory working group<sup>2</sup> regarding the facilitation mechanism will also address some of the issues raised in the draft proposal and could provide possible solutions to the challenges identified.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/10/PDF/N1147610.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>2</sup> The intergovernmental preparatory working group should be constituted before the end of 2013 and should report to the high-level political forum according to the recommendations regarding the facilitation mechanism

Item 4(d) – Communication strategy, electronic tools and publications

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the secretariat for carrying out the survey on the communication strategy. We believe that the results of the survey are very important and reflect not only the relevance of communication activities for countries and stakeholders, but also the need for improvements in certain areas of work.

Item 4(e) – Global promotion of the Protocol

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the secretariat, OECD, and UNITAR for organising the joint round table on PRTRs. We believe that this event is a significant step forward in further developing the implementation of the PRTR Protocol and its promotion beyond the UNECE region.

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