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Third session

Budva, Montenegro, 15 September 2017

Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda

Promotion and capacity-building: technical resources and subregional and national activities

Report on the second subregional workshop “Get Your Right to a Healthy Community”

Prepared by the secretariat

Summary

In accordance with its mandate, the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the work programme for the Protocol and preparing the sessions of the Meeting of the Parties (see ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/4, para. 2). Furthermore, at its second session, the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol requested the Working Group “to keep under review the activities of the work programme for the period 2015–2017, and to report and make appropriate recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties at its third ordinary session” (ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1, decision II/3, para. 5).

In accordance with those mandates, at its fifth meeting (Geneva, 23–24 November 2016), the Working Group of the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare a report on the subregional workshop, “Get Your Right to a Healthy Community”, held in Minsk from 19 to 21 September 2016, for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its third session (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2016/2, para. 20).

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Introduction

1. The secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and the secretariat of the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention), in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of the Republic of Belarus, organized the second subregional workshop to promote the Protocol and the Air Convention in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The workshop was held on 19 to 21 September 2016 in Minsk, Belarus.

2. The three-day event aimed to promote the implementation and ratification of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, also through exploring the synergies between the Protocol and the Air Convention in data collecting and reporting. Relevant authorities with political and technical responsibilities, along with representatives of civil society and pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) experts from participating countries, shared knowledge, learned from each other and discussed solutions to existing deficiencies in relation to the implementation and use of PRTRs.

3. Through a range of specific thematic sessions, participants found out how better to deal with the implementation of pollutant release and transfer registers at the national level as regards: (a) creating the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks; (b) developing the list of chemical substances and enterprises to be covered; (c) developing reporting requirements; (d) managing data and its dissemination; (e) foreseeing capacity-building needs; and (f) promoting public awareness.

A. Attendance

5. The workshop was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Protocol: Germany, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine.

6. Representatives of Armenia, Georgia and Tajikistan, signatories to the Protocol, also attended the meeting.

7. In addition, delegations from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were present.

8. Also attending were representatives of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe. A Vice-Chair of the Protocol's Compliance Committee was also present.

9. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented at the workshop: "Aquamedia" (Georgia); "Catena Ecological Club" (Turkmenistan); "EcoContact" (Republic of Moldova); "ECOSCOPE" (Azerbaijan); "Environment-People-Law" (Ukraine); the European ECO Forum; "Foundation to support civil initiatives" (Tajikistan); "Hayajan" Nature Protection and Rehabilitation Organization (Azerbaijan); "Khazer" Ecological and Cultural NGO (Armenia); and Zoï Environment Network (Switzerland). Many of the NGOs coordinated their input within the framework of the European ECO Forum.

B. Proceedings

10. The workshop, which was chaired by Ms. Tina Skärman (Sweden), Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, was

organized in 10 sessions, with sessions 3 to 6 focusing on specific thematic aspects of the Protocol's implementation:

1. Setting the scene — introduction to development of national pollutant release and transfer registers;
 2. Sharing views on the current status and challenges for PRTR development in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;
 3. The institutional and regulatory framework for data collection, dissemination and access to information;
 4. PRTR data quality and management;
 5. Access to data and its dissemination data presentation, including capacity-building for data usage and public awareness;
 6. Scope of the Protocol: activities, substances, releases;
 7. The Protocol in the context of other international processes;
 8. The Air Convention and its protocols — synergies on data collection and reporting between emission inventories and PRTR;
 9. Best practices in PRTR implementation — addressing problematic areas and creating pathways for progress;
 10. Summary remarks by the Chair and closing statement by the host.
11. Prior to the workshop a questionnaire was sent to participating countries to ascertain the status of PRTR developments in the respective countries. At the workshop, and based on the answers to the questionnaire, participants formed working groups which further identified problems, needs and solutions in relation to PRTR developments. Each of the thematic sessions included expert presentations and a period of discussion in which participants provided interventions and posed questions to the expert panel.
12. Ms. Skårman opened the workshop. Mr. Sergei Melnov, Director of the Belarusian Research Centre "Ecology", delivered a welcoming statement. Mr. Ivan Narkevitch, Coordinator of International projects at the Belarusian Research Centre "Ecology" then provided a presentation on pollutant release and transfer register developments in Belarus and addressing the links between the Air Convention, the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and the development of the shared environmental information systems.
13. The main outputs of the workshop included background materials and presentations,¹ and the present report. The outcomes of the workshop are expected to provide a basis for future work on establishing pollutant release and transfer register systems and capacity-building activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. International organizations embarking on the development of pollutant release and transfer registers in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia were strongly encouraged to utilize the outcomes from this workshop.

I. Session one: setting the scene — introduction to development of national pollutant release and transfer registers

14. The secretariats of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and the Air Convention each provided an introductory presentation on the respective instruments,

¹ These documents and other information and documentation for the workshop, including presentations, are available online from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=43077#/>.

including aspects of their implementation. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol then gave an overview of the Swedish pollutant release and transfer register, highlighting good practices of the Swedish approach to implementing the Protocol, including with regard to how emissions from diffuse sources and additional information on substances, such as their impact on human health, can be integrated in a register.

15. In the ensuing discussion, participants noted, among others:

(a) The need to harmonize methods for measurement and calculation of releases used by different facilities through regulation and based on emissions levels;

(b) While not strictly required by the Protocol, the desirability of aiming to establish fully electronic reporting systems for industry;

(c) The usefulness of adding health-related information and creating linkages between data and needs of stakeholders that could be used, e.g., in educational programmes;

(d) That data on diffuse sources could be largely obtained through the application of emission factors and by using information from other reporting obligations, such as under the Air Convention and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

(f) That mature registers had received “few to no” requests by owners or operators that the data not be made publicly available.

II. Session two: sharing views on the current status and challenges for pollutant release and transfer register development in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

16. In session two, and with the aim to inform the discussions in the subsequent thematic sessions, participants heard information about the current situation of PRTR development in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. To that end, representatives of each country from the subregion reported on the current status, challenges, needs and plans in relation to the development of pollutant release and transfer registers in their countries and accession to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. This allowed participants to understand better the challenges in the subregion.

17. The identification of common needs in relation to register development in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia led to the elaboration of the following list of the key challenges:

(a) Limited professional capacity of operators and owners to calculate or measure emissions;

(b) Limited professional capacity of staff in local and national authorities;

(c) Management of different data flows that can be combined in a pollutant release and transfer database for the benefit of providing the possibility to use the data for other purposes;

(d) Difficulty in pursuing institutional reforms;

(e) Lack of coordination between different entities, and integration and coordination across sectors;

(f) Lack of trained staff and financial resources allocated to pollutant release and transfer registers;

- (g) Lack of software systems that allow for electronic reporting;
- (h) Lack of laboratories and monitoring programmes and staff with the relevant expertise;
- (i) Lack of public awareness on pollutant release and transfer registers and related issues.

18. A representative of Environment-People-Law presented a project that made use of currently available statistical data in Ukraine to visualize pollutant releases in an online map format.² The project had been started by Environment-People-Law without a link to governmental efforts in the development of a PRTR. Environment-People-Law currently planned to hand over its system to the government authorities, in the light of ongoing activities to develop an official pollutant release and transfer register system in Ukraine.

III. Session three: the institutional and regulatory framework for data collection, dissemination and access to information

19. For session three, Mr. Gor Movsisyan, Vice-Chair of the Protocol's Compliance Committee, described the institutional and regulatory framework for data collection, dissemination and access to information based on the Protocol's provisions.

20. In the discussion that followed, participants discussed the best methodologies for measurements and calculation of releases. While different methodologies were possible, it was recommended to use those that were in line with international standards. It was noted in that regard that the Protocol aimed to foster the harmonization of different registers internationally. For example, it was not obligatory to apply International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards, but they represented best practice. At the national level, standards could be made mandatory for operators or owners to apply depending on the national legislation and regulations. It was furthermore noted that, while one should strive for international data comparability and the use of similar methods in different facilities, in practice the best methodology to use for data collection depended on, e.g., the age of a facility and the production methods employed. It was therefore not feasible to make use of the same methodology for all facilities. While that was the case, it was even the more important to keep good track of how the data was measured, calculated and collected. Also, data collection of other factors, like production output, energy or water consumption could help to make data more easily comparable. In that context, a participant wondered what the ideal institutional set-up would be to manage a PRTR. It was stated that no such ideal set-up existed. What was important was to well distinguish responsibilities of the institutions involved and to identify one authority with final responsibility for the management of the register.

21. The following key challenges were identified in relation to the institutional and regulatory framework for data collection, dissemination and access to information:

- (a) Assuring the quality of data and keeping a record of the methodologies applied for data collection;
- (b) Enforcing an established schedule of reporting by owners and operators and the subsequent timeline for internal data flow;
- (c) Improving integrated pollution prevention and control and information collection systems;

² See <http://seis.org.ua/>.

(d) Promoting the register among all stakeholders, including inside government entities;

(e) Presenting data in a way that it could be used easily and for a wide variety of purposes.

22. The following key solutions were identified in relation to the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice:

(a) In general, to use legislation and regulation to establish a clear distinction of competencies and to identify an authority with final responsibility for the management of the register;

(b) For data quality assurance issues, to clarify at an early stage of register development who was responsible for which activity within the system (owners and operators or authorities on different levels);

(c) To avoid the development of separate sub-systems, understanding data flow as an integrated system including legislation, data input, review and output;

(d) Making sure that the smallest units for reporting were adequately covered by law and regulations.

IV. Session four: pollutant release and transfer register data management and quality

23. For session four, presentations were provided on data management and quality by Mr. Falk Hilliges of the Federal Environment Agency, Germany, and Mr. Nebojsa Redzic of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Serbia, a member of the Protocol's Bureau.

24. The following comments were made and questions were addressed during the discussion:

(a) Responding to a question on when errors in data could be detected, it was stated that they could be detected at all levels. Once an error was identified it was sent back to the previous part of the quality check chain for further verification — e.g., from federal, to state, to facility level;

(b) Regarding issues in communicating with companies, it was noted that it was sometimes a problem that operators were requested to separately correct errors in their PRTR and Air Convention data sets, which led to confusion;

(c) Multiple queries from participants to the panel addressed the use of emission factors to calculate emissions. It was remarked that most data was gained from the use of emission factors, including the calculation of diffuse emissions from a variety of sources. In addition to international emission factors, also national emission factors were developed for diffuse but also for point sources;

(d) In response to a question on the use of PRTR data by NGOs, the example was given of NGOs pointing out high mercury emissions from coal plants in Germany. As a result measures had been developed by the competent authority that aimed to reduce mercury pollution from coal plants;

(e) It was noted that in Serbia each facility needed to report only once to fulfil its different reporting obligations and therefore with no duplication of reporting. Furthermore, all emissions needed to be reported, with no limitations based on reporting thresholds. In addition, owners or operators were asked to report on, e.g., used raw materials, fuels and

production output. The Serbian system exceeded the requirements under the Protocol in that regard with benefits for data quality assurance based on the additional data available to the authorities. While the data was reported to the authorities it was not necessarily made available to the public. The strong information technology support further allowed the Serbian register to run with a smaller number of regular staff to assure, e.g., the quality of the data. Responding to a question, the Serbian representative further noted that the reporting by small facilities was sometimes a challenge, but mainly when operators or owners changed and the new staff was not yet familiar with the reporting process. These issues could successfully be addressed in direct consultations with the operators or owners.

25. The following key challenges and corresponding solutions were identified in relation to PRTR data quality and management:

(a) In particular in countries with a federal structure, the coordination among competent authorities was a complex issue that was addressed through the development of joint working groups, with representatives from all involved and the development of administrative agreements;

(b) A lack of professional capacity for reporting in facilities, e.g., including pig and poultry farms and mining facilities in Serbia, was addressed through providing tailored guidance on reporting and the development of sector-specific emission factors and forms for reporting;

(c) To prevent incorrect data from being reported and imported into the system, it was necessary to provide guidance documents on reporting that were easy to understand and to make sure that electronic forms within the system were equally easy to understand and were transparent to the user. It was also helpful when the system was capable of performing automatic data validation and when it provided instant feedback to the user;

(d) It was helpful to establish standardized and fully automated quality assurance checks and data control instances at various levels in the system;

(e) To keep PRTRs fit for purpose, it was important to plan for the registers further development. That included to plan to continuously improve methods for collecting data and quality checks, and to add additional factors to the register, like emissions from diffuse sources, energy and water consumption.

V. Session five: access to data and its dissemination and data presentation, including capacity-building for data usage and public awareness

26. In session five, presentations were provided on access to data and its dissemination, data presentation, including capacity-building for data usage and public awareness by Mr. Íñigo De Vicente-Mingarro, the Administrator of PRTR-España at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment of Spain, by Ms. Mara Silina of the European ECO Forum and by Ms. Magdolna Tothne Nagy, a project consultant at the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe.

27. The following key challenges were identified in relation to access to data and its dissemination and data presentation, including capacity-building for data usage and public awareness:

(a) Managing the involvement of many competent authorities, e.g., regional governments and river basin districts and the national government;

(b) Streamlining reporting at the national level for different national and international reporting obligations, such as national inventories, information on diffuse

sources and reporting to the Air Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements;

(c) Improving the usefulness of the information contained in the register and better addressing the different needs for different stakeholder groups;

(d) Improving the ways the register's content was presented and communicated to stakeholders, through, for example, better graphic representation;

(e) Addressing the lack of political will and regular financial resources allocated for further development, maintenance and update of PRTRs, as building registers solely on a project basis created the difficulty of providing continuity once the project had run out;

(f) Addressing issues related to "substances of very high concern" under the European Union Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation³ in reporting;

(g) Improving efforts to raise awareness of all stakeholders about the register.

28. The following key solutions were identified in relation to access to data and its dissemination and data presentation, including capacity-building for data usage and public awareness:

(a) To make use of the online nature of the register to facilitate cooperation between the different authorities involved;

(b) Graphic displays of pollution release data were one of the most consulted parts of, for example, the Spanish PRTR, and had helped to increase public awareness and usability of the data;

(c) Capacity-building activities that were focused on awareness-raising and establishing a regular dialogue with different stakeholders helped to improve the situation regarding issues with accessibility and a lack of data usage by stakeholders;

(d) It was important to promote registers also by the use of advertising campaigns targeting the public, in order to make use of a registers' full potential. In Spain, slogans such as "If you don't find out, it is because you don't want to know" had helped to raise public awareness of the Spanish register;

(e) To put data into a context that was of interest to stakeholders, in order to improve the usefulness of the PRTR data.

VI. Session six: scope of the Protocol — activities, substances, releases

29. For session six, presentations related to the scope of the Protocol were given by Mr. Øyvind Hetland, a senior engineer with the Norwegian Environment Agency, and Mr. Andrei Isac, an environmental expert at the NGO EcoContact (Republic of Moldova).

30. The following issues were addressed during the discussion:

³ Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC, 2006 O. J. (L 396).

(a) When comparing data gathering for the Air Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, the fundamental difference was a top-down versus a bottom-up approach: for the Air Convention, agencies responsible for environmental matters and for statistics provided data, and for the Protocol on PRTRs, data was being provided by the polluter, i.e., industrial facilities. Owing to the differences in the underlying sources of data, the comparison of the data sets allowed for both improved quality control of data sets and an improved overall understanding of pollution releases to air;

(b) One of the future plans in Norway, and with the aim to improve the usefulness of the data for the public, was to analyse how pollution at a certain location presented a risk to human health;

(c) In the Republic of Moldova, the integration of the national register in a national e-governance system was planned, including possible linkage with fiscal data use.

31. The following key challenges were identified in relation to the scope of the Protocol:

(a) The agricultural sector, an important source for releases, e.g., of pesticides and greenhouse gases, was not fully covered;

(b) Production data were considered confidential data, which, among others, made it more difficult to compare release data from facilities;

(c) The institutional set-up of countries was often not adjusted to the needs for effective implementation of the Protocol;

(d) Private sector staff needed methodological support and trainings on substances and releases.

32. The following key solutions were identified in relation to the scope of the Protocol:

(a) Clearly defining priority sectors, companies, substances and national thresholds at the beginning of the registers development;

(b) Accommodating the necessary budget to run the register continually over time, taking into account continuous further development of the register to deal with potential changes in industry activities and related releases of pollutants.

VII. Session seven: the Protocol in the context of other international processes

33. Session seven covered the Protocol in the context of other international processes. Presentations were given by Mr. De Vicente-Mingarro, in his role as Chair of the International PRTR Coordinating Group, Ms. Skårman, on behalf of the Bureau of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Group on PRTRs, Mr. Jorge Ocaña, of the UNITAR Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, and Ms. Raisa Gerasina, a project manager at the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe.

34. In addition to the presentation of current projects and work ongoing under the above-mentioned groups and organizations, Mr. De Vicente-Mingarro elaborated on the role of PRTRs in promoting sustainability and good governance, how the harmonization of PRTR data could be addressed, questions such as what could be done to improve the information for the public or to generate a better understanding and use of PRTR data by the public, and the great potential that PRTRs had for coordination and for building synergies as a reporting tool to multilateral environmental agreements (e.g., the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the three chemical conventions under United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the

Mediterranean and the Kyoto Protocol to UNFCCC). With regard to the latter, Mr. Ocaña shared additional information and also demonstrated the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) toolbox, which could be used to identify appropriate and efficient national actions to implement PRTRs. The presenters shared links to a number of useful documents.⁴

35. Ms. Skårman also addressed issues such as exploring potential uses of PRTR data for measuring the impact of environmental policies; the role of PRTR data as a practical means to assess progress towards global sustainability; evaluating best available techniques policies by using PRTR data; and compiling good practices on the application of PRTR data for local environmental management.

36. The following lessons learned from past activities of these organizations were raised during a discussion on the development of national PRTRs in the region:

(a) Clear policy decisions and strong political commitment were key to achieve any long-term project goals;

(b) Involving country partners in project design, planning and implementation over the years resulted in improved capacities of the involved national experts and a more effective working relationship between local and international experts;

(c) Sharing of experience of countries, in particular with more advanced, neighbouring countries, also advanced national PRTR implementation;

(d) Transparent decision-making and regular dialogue with stakeholders brought additional expertise to advance the register and increased stakeholder motivation and support for a strong national implementation of the PRTR system.

VIII. Session eight: the Air Convention and its protocols — synergies on data collection and reporting between emission inventories and pollutant release and transfer registers

37. For session eight, Mr. Juan Luis Martin Ortega, an Air Convention and PRTR expert from Aether Ltd, explained the basis for synergies between the two treaties in data collecting and reporting.

38. It was noted that this workshop was the first time when experts working on national reporting under the Protocol on PRTRs and the Air Convention and its protocols had received an opportunity to meet and share their experience.

39. The following issues related to data collection and reporting between emission inventories and PRTRs were discussed:

(a) As similar information was needed for both treaties, the integration of the reporting systems of both instruments was desirable;

(b) A fully integrated system needed to include all combined activities and pollutants of both instruments;

(c) Even if the emission inventories and pollution release registers could not be integrated, the knowledge from one system could still feed the other, e.g., for data quality assurance purposes, making data on diffuse sources available to the public and deriving national emission factors;

⁴ Documents are available from the OECD PRTR website <http://www.oecd.org/env/prtr> and the website of the ECE Protocol on PRTRs <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.html>.

(d) Regarding PRTR reporting thresholds, the selection of low or no reporting thresholds for registers would help to make data more easily comparable through the resulting higher coverage of national emissions through the PRTR system.

40. The following key challenges and solutions (where available) were identified:

(a) Different definitions of, for example, pollutants and activities required a careful approach when comparing data reported to each of the instruments separately. Differences between registers and emission inventories made it necessary to aggregate and/or disaggregate data;

(b) Reporting thresholds for pollutant release and transfer registers were an important challenge to finding synergies on data collection and reporting between emission inventories and PRTRs, as emission inventories needed 100 per cent of the national total of emissions, while registers under the Protocol only covered facilities and releases that were above specified thresholds. Countries could, however, establish lower or no thresholds also for PRTR data;

(c) To make use of synergies from two established and non-integrated systems was a complex undertaking. It was therefore clearly favourable to follow an integrated approach from the start, by starting the exercise with a comprehensive inventory of existing international agreements and national legislation and regulations. That should be done in order to identify where there were synergies and to avoid similar separate systems being developed in parallel. It was also noted that for owners and operators of facilities the use of an integrated system was easier, and led to better support for the instrument by different groups of stakeholders;

(d) While requiring improved coordination between different actors, an integrated approach was more cost-effective both for authorities and operators, could give better data quality and added usefulness to the database.

IX. Bilaterals: best practices in pollutant release and transfer register implementation — addressing problematic areas and creating pathways for progress

41. Session nine consisted of bilateral sessions on two themes — setting up a pollutant release and transfer register; and calculation and measurement — with a view to offering an opportunity to match the needs of countries at the early stages of developing their registers with available technical assistance. The topics were first elaborated in two groups in separate meeting areas. At each meeting point participants introduced their concerns and PRTR needs and expectations were discussed. Then the outcomes of the group discussions were shared and discussed with all workshop participants.

42. Regarding the setting up of a register, there was agreement that a long list of challenges, many of which were discussed in the thematic sessions, existed and that they needed to be overcome in order to have a useful and well-functioning PRTR system. Participants found that challenges, such as gaining continuous political support for the maintenance and improvement of the register over time, were often directly related to other problems such as limited awareness of companies about the benefits of reporting pollutants and waste transfer for their own interests and an absence of demand for PRTR data by the public.

43. The group that had discussed and exchanged experience on calculation and measurement issues came to similar conclusions and identified as a fundamental need to improve the communication between authorities and the private sector without neglecting other stakeholder needs.

X. Major conclusions

44. Major conclusions from the workshop are as follows:

(a) Good representation and active participation was achieved: 11 out of 12 countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia were represented;

(b) Key challenges, needs and solutions were identified for thematic sessions that represented the main aspects relevant for the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. These outcomes provide a basis for identifying priority areas for future PRTR development work, capacity-building activities and bilateral programmes. The outcomes can be utilized by countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and by international organizations, such as ECE, the Global Environment Facility, OECD, UNITAR and the United Nations Environment Programme, in order to inform ongoing and planned capacity-building activities.

XI. Closure of the workshop

45. In a closing statement, the Chair summarized the capacity-building benefits of the subregional workshop and thanked the participating countries and organizations for sharing their achievements, challenges and solutions with regard to the implementation of PRTR systems. She also highlighted once again the important synergies with the Air Convention in data collecting and reporting, and thanked experts in the field of the Air Convention for their fruitful participation in the event.
