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## Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the 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

### Working Group of the Parties

#### Third meeting

Geneva, 20 and 21 November 2013

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of the current work programme of the Protocol, including financial matters**

### **Report on implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2011–2014**

#### Note by the secretariat

##### *Summary*

In its decision I/6, the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making Procedures and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters requested the secretariat to provide a detailed assessment of the activities in the work programme for the period 2011–2014, including a breakdown of the cost estimates for each activity, and to report to the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, para. 4).<sup>1</sup> It was also requested that the assessment include an examination of whether or not a separate technical assistance mechanism should be established.

The present note by the secretariat was prepared in response to the above requests.

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<sup>1</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mopp1.html>

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## Introduction

1. Since the adoption of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in 2003, 38 States have become Signatories to the Protocol and there are currently 32 Parties. The Protocol entered into force on 8 October 2009. Since the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 20–22 April 2010), the following States have become Parties: Slovenia, on 23 April 2010; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 2 November 2010; Serbia, on 23 November 2011; Ireland on 20 June 2012; Poland on 25 September 2012; Cyprus on 5 November 2012; and Israel on 14 January 2013.<sup>2</sup>
2. This document provides an overview of the implementation of the Protocol's work programme for 2011–2014 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/6, annex I) as of 10 July 2013, focusing on operational and organizational aspects. The status of work in each of the work programmes' activity areas is described.
3. The secretariat made serious efforts to avoid duplication of work and inefficient use of resources through pursuing synergies with activities under other partner organizations. In addition, the secretariat conducted specific thematic surveys prior to activities in order to respond better to the needs of Parties and stakeholders. Furthermore, the secretariat used and is planning to continue using more electronic tools (e.g., e-mail consultations, phone conferences, online databases, the clearinghouse mechanism and the PRTR.net global portal).

## I. Work programme for 2011–2014: overview of implementation

### A. Compliance mechanism

4. The objective of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on PRTRs is to monitor and facilitate compliance with the Protocol. The method of work of the Committee is to meet to review submissions and communications, prepare decisions and reports and undertake fact-finding missions. For its part, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Protocol secretariat publicizes the mechanism, develops a database of cases and services the Committee.
5. The first meeting of the Compliance Committee took place in Geneva on 27 and 28 January 2011 (see ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2011/2).<sup>3</sup> The Committee elected Mr Alistair McGlone as its Chair by consensus. The Committee discussed and adopted the document on its methods of work (modus operandi), as amended at the meeting, and agreed to revisit it, as appropriate, at its next meeting. The Committee also prepared a checklist for submissions, referrals and communications to the Compliance Committee.
6. The Committee has to date received no submissions by Parties concerning other Parties, submissions by Parties concerning their own compliance, formal referrals by the secretariat, or formal communications from the public.

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<sup>2</sup> Information on the status of ratifications is available from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ratification.html>

<sup>3</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=25022>

## B. Technical assistance

7. The objective of technical assistance activities is to assist countries in the effective implementation of the Protocol and to evaluate the need for a separate technical assistance mechanism. The method of work involves specific projects in countries needing assistance, including training workshops, guidance materials and technical assistance, which are mostly separately funded. There is a minimum of one subregional workshop per year, with a follow-up questionnaire sent and an analysis of the results.

### **Training on the pollutant release and transfer register cost model**

8. The secretariat organized a training session on a cost model to support implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs on 28 November 2011, as a part of the first meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol (28–29 November 2011, Geneva) (See ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/3).<sup>4</sup> The cost model presented is a tool for developing detailed estimates of the magnitude of costs of monitoring emissions (releases) of substances contained in annex II to the Protocol to different environmental media (air, water and land), in order to assist Parties to the Protocol with its implementation. The training described core aspects of that process, including the cost model assumptions and the cost estimate per substance; the aggregate cost per facility; the aggregate cost per activity; and the aggregate cost per country. An online version of the cost model questionnaire was also described. The Excel version of the cost model was made available to the Working Group on CD-ROM and on the ECE website.<sup>5</sup>

9. Files describing the cost model are also being translated into Russian to facilitate greater use of the model in Russian-speaking countries.

### **Side events**

10. The secretariat organized and serviced the following side events, which facilitated the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in relation to the Protocol:

(a) “Implementing pollutant release and transfer registers to promote sustainable development”, side event at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention held in Chisinau on 30 June 2011;

(b) “Pollutant release and transfer registers: an efficient tool for sustainable water management”, side event at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, (Astana Ministerial Conference) held in Astana on 22 September 2011.

### **Subregional workshops**

11. The secretariat organized and serviced the “Get Your Right to A Healthy Community” subregional workshop on the Protocol for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia on 3 and 4 November 2011 in Minsk. The workshop aimed to promote ratification and future implementation of the Protocol in these countries.

12. The second “Get Your Right to A Healthy Community” subregional workshop on the Protocol was organized and serviced jointly with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The workshop, which took place on 28 and 29 May 2013 in Sarajevo, aimed to promote ratification and future implementation of the Protocol in South-Eastern Europe and Israel.

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<sup>4</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=25026>

<sup>5</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr.cb.html>, under “PRTR cost model” link.

### **Country-specific projects**

13. The secretariat, in cooperation with OSCE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is exploring opportunities for pursuing a project for Belarus, which includes components on building capacities for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention (organizing model public hearings, a three-day capacity-building workshop and a study tour) as well as the Protocol on PRTRs (establishing a pilot pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR)). The project was approved under the auspices of the Environment and Security Initiative and supported by the Government of Sweden.

### **Technical assistance via electronic tools**

14. The secretariat has continued managing the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy<sup>6</sup> and the PRTR.net global portal.<sup>7</sup> The PRTR.net global portal is used to facilitate the collection, dissemination and exchange of information related to PRTRs. The Protocol secretariat has maintained and updated PRTR.net in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and continues pursuing close cooperation with UNITAR in order to ensure the effective use of PRTR.net and PRTR:Learn<sup>8</sup> by national focal points and stakeholders. For example, PRTR.net was synergized with the PRTR:Learn website (an interactive portal developed and managed by UNITAR). PRTR.net and the Aarhus Clearinghouse were subject to an upgrading project during 2010–2011 conducted by the Global Resource Information Database centre in Arendal, Norway (GRID-Arendal). An agreement was reached with GRID-Arendal on hosting the Aarhus Clearinghouse and PRTR.net at no cost in 2012 and 2013.

15. The secretariat further developed a database on capacity-building activities,<sup>9</sup> which serves as an information source for past, future and ongoing PRTR capacity-building activities. The secretariat continues administration of the database, and upgraded a feature on PRTR.net to enable national focal points and stakeholders to log in and add data to the PRTR capacity-building activities database. The secretariat is collating data for a future upgrade of the Aarhus Clearinghouse.

16. In addition, the secretariat regularly distributed to national focal points and stakeholders joint messages from ECE, OECD and UNITAR on electronic tools for PRTRs. The messages described the tools managed by the Protocol secretariat, as well as the PRTR:Learn tool managed by UNITAR, the OECD Centre for PRTR Data,<sup>10</sup> the OECD Resource Centre for Release Estimation Techniques<sup>11</sup> and the E-PRTR software made available by the European Environment Agency for free download.<sup>12</sup> Reference was also made to the development of PRTR software and databases by Germany, Spain and Switzerland.

17. The PRTR Protocol section of the ECE website was regularly updated in the intersessional period. In addition, section D below includes information regarding the online reporting tool.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.prtr.net/>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://prtr.unitar.org/>

<sup>9</sup> Available from <http://apps.unece.org/ehlm/pp/NIR/RLsearch.asp>

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.oecd.org/env\\_prtr\\_data/](http://www.oecd.org/env_prtr_data/)

<sup>11</sup> Available from [www.oecd.org/env/prtr\\_rc](http://www.oecd.org/env/prtr_rc)

<sup>12</sup> Available from <https://svn.eionet.europa.eu/repositories/EPRTR/trunk/>

### **Technical assistance via guidance materials**

18. The Russian version of the *Guidance on Implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers* (ECE/MP.PP/7) was published and widely disseminated. A simplified guide on the Protocol, *Your Right to A Healthy Community* (ECE/MP.PP/8), was published and disseminated in English, French and Russian. Both publications are available on the ECE website.<sup>13</sup>

19. Translation of the full PRTR Guidance on Implementation into Spanish was completed in May 2012 and the Spanish version was made available on the ECE website.

### **Thematic surveys**

20. The secretariat carried out the following four thematic surveys on PRTRs:

(a) *Survey on possible needs for a technical assistance mechanism.* This survey was distributed to Parties and Signatories to the Protocol and other ECE member States in order to gather information on the need for a technical assistance mechanism to support the implementation of the Protocol. The survey collected information on countries' current activities on PRTRs, identified barriers to the implementation of PRTRs and determined which specific activities should be undertaken to support the implementation and improvement of PRTRs. The results of the survey will be considered in developing the future work programme for the Protocol;

(b) *Survey on pollutant monitoring, diffuse releases and bilateral cooperation.* This survey was distributed to Parties and Signatories to the Protocol and other ECE member States. The survey collected information on who pays for and who carries out the pollutant monitoring in each country, identified information and methods in relation to measuring or estimating diffuse releases in each country and identified potential for bilateral cooperation between countries so as to help meet countries' needs for assistance and training. The results of the survey will be used by national focal points and the partner organizations for advisory support and bilateral cooperation;

(c) *Survey on current activities on PRTRs in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.* The survey collected information on current activities on PRTRs in the countries of the subregion, identified gaps relevant to the full implementation of PRTRs and determined activities that should be undertaken to support the implementation and improvement of PRTRs in these countries. The results of the survey provided the basis for discussions at the Minsk workshop and will be used by the national focal points, the secretariat and the partner organizations for future capacity-building activities and bilateral cooperation. The answers received were uploaded on the ECE website and were also used to produce the note on the results of surveys on PRTRs that was submitted to the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting;<sup>14</sup>

(d) *Survey on the current status and possible needs for the development of PRTRs.* In view of the subregional workshop organized in Sarajevo in May 2013, a special survey was also distributed to the countries from South-Eastern Europe and Israel. The survey covered the current status of PRTR development in these countries and identified possible capacity needs and potential for bilateral or multilateral technical cooperation. The results of the survey provided the basis for discussions at the workshop in Sarajevo and will be used by the national focal points, the secretariat and the partner organizations for future capacity-building activities and bilateral cooperation. The answers received were uploaded

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/publications.html>

<sup>14</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=28225>

on the ECE website. A summary analysis of the survey results, prepared by the secretariat, was also uploaded on the ECE website.<sup>15</sup>

The survey responses are available on the ECE website.<sup>16</sup> The secretariat submitted a note on the results of the first two surveys to the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol at its second meeting (Geneva, 20–21 November 2012) (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2012/5).<sup>17</sup>

#### **Technical assistance mechanism**

21. The Working Group of the Parties agreed at its first meeting on the importance of technical assistance, and took note of the report prepared on the basis of the outcomes of the survey on a technical assistance mechanism conducted by the secretariat (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/4).<sup>18</sup> The Working Group discussed the matter and agreed that the establishment of a specific capacity-building fund or mechanism was not required. At its second meeting, the Working Group took note of the document on technical assistance and resources (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2012/4), and encouraged Governments and stakeholders to use the modalities described for the possible provision of technical assistance to support implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs.

22. Also at its second meeting, the Working Group explored the potential for technical assistance during a bilateral session on matching needs with expertise and where possible to conduct further bilateral discussions to support implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs (PRTR/WG.1/2012/Inf.5).<sup>19</sup>

23. At the same meeting, Belarus submitted a proposal on activities for the promotion of the Protocol on PRTRs in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (PRTR/WG.1/2012/Inf.2).<sup>20</sup> As requested by the Working Group, the Governments of Armenia and Belarus prepared a revised version of the proposal in consultation with the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and the secretariat, for consideration by the Bureau. The proposal is expected to be submitted to the Working Group of the Parties for consideration at its third meeting.

### **C. Information exchange on a technical level**

24. The objective of information exchange on a technical level is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Protocol. The method of work for information exchange is via meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol, ad hoc meetings and the use of electronic tools.

25. In addition, sections B above and E below describe a training, surveys, side events, subregional workshops and other activities, as well as electronic tools that enable information exchange on a technical level. Sections D and F below include information on the reporting mechanism and the meetings of the Working Group of the Parties.

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<sup>15</sup> Available from [http://www.unece.org/prtr\\_see2013](http://www.unece.org/prtr_see2013)

<sup>16</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/protocol-on-prtrs/areas-of-work/envpprtrcb/surveys.html>

<sup>17</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=28225>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## D. Reporting mechanism

26. The objective of the reporting mechanism is to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Protocol and to facilitate reporting, review of compliance and exchange of experience. The method of work is via meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol, exchange on a technical level of information on the application of electronic information tools and use of the online national implementation reports database in the Aarhus Clearinghouse, the PRTR:Learn website, the PRTR capacity-building activities matrix and e-reporting.

27. The online reporting system for the Aarhus Convention was presented at the first meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, and the Working Group agreed that a similar tool should be developed for the reporting under the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/2, para. 24 (c)).<sup>21</sup> The secretariat has engaged a consultant to develop an online reporting system for the Protocol, which is expected to be launched in fall 2013 in time for the submission of national implementation reports by Parties. In addition, section B above includes information on other electronic tools.

## E. Awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol and its interlinkages with other treaties and processes

28. The objective of awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol and its interlinkages with other treaties and processes is to further the knowledge of the Protocol throughout the ECE region and beyond, to increase the number of Parties to the Protocol and to further the application of the Protocol in the context of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and related processes (e.g., the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management/International Conference on Chemicals Management under UNEP). The method of work for this activity is to: participate in key regional and international events and processes; provide support to workshops organized by others; prepare leaflets, publications, news bulletins and other materials; update the website; and write and review articles on the Protocol.

### Events

29. The secretariat has carried out this activity through the participation of, or arranging for the participation of, representatives of the Convention and Protocol bodies in workshops and other events in various countries to promote and raise awareness of the Convention and its Protocol at the international level, including the following:

- (a) It promoted the Convention and the Protocol at the conference, “Transparency in marine fisheries: The role of the European Union’s Common Fisheries Policy”, held in Brussels on 26 January 2011;
- (b) It promoted the Convention and the Protocol at a briefing for countries of Central Asia (Geneva, 23 March 2011);
- (c) It promoted the work under the Protocol at the meetings of the PRTR Task Force (Paris, 3–5 October 2011 and 10–12 September 2012) and the Task Force on Exposure Assessment under OECD (Paris, 3–5 October 2011);
- (d) It assisted the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Bureaux of the Convention and the Protocol in providing input to a joint message from the ECE MEAs and the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy suggesting amendments to the zero draft of outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio+20

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<sup>21</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=25026>

Conference), *The Future We Want*. The message aimed to promote the Convention and the Protocol at the Rio+20 Conference (Rio de Janeiro, 20–22 June 2012). It was distributed to national focal points and stakeholders in the region;

(e) During the Rio+20 Conference, the secretariat, in cooperation with numerous partners, organized, coordinated and provided input to the following side events at which the Convention and the Protocol were promoted:

(i) A full-day side event on Principle 10, “Choosing Our Future: Open and Participatory Sustainable Development Governance”, on 19 June 2012, in particular, the following sessions:

a. The first session, organized in collaboration with *Corporación Participa*, “Principle 10 Regional Conventions”, which focused on next steps and the content for a possible regional convention on access rights in Latin America and the Caribbean, including lessons learned from the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs in the ECE region;

b. The second session, entitled “Public Participation in International Environmental Governance”, which focused on lessons from applying the Almaty Guidelines on promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums, the Aarhus Convention compliance mechanism and access mechanisms (including citizen-initiated complaint mechanisms) in other sustainable development-related forums and institutions;

(ii) A joint side event of the United Nations regional commissions, “Green Growth and Sustainable Development: Regional Perspectives”, on 21 June 2012. The ECE contribution to that event looked at Principle 10 and its implementation through ECE legal and policy instruments, in particular the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol, the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and the UNECE<sup>22</sup> Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development;

(iii) A European Economic and Social Committee side event, “Civil society Taking Global Responsibility”, on 21 June 2012;

(iv) A European Environment Agency side event, “Sharing environment information in action”, on 19 June 2012;

(v) A UNEP-led side event, “Access for All”, on 21 June 2012;

(f) A presentation on the Protocol on PRTRs was provided via Skype at the stakeholder event, “Capacity-building to Put the Aarhus Convention into Action and Support Development of PRTR Systems in South-Eastern European Countries — Implementing the Protocol on PRTRs in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Sarajevo, 16 November 2012);

(g) A presentation on the Protocol on PRTRs was provided via Skype at a PRTR stakeholder event organized by the Regional Environmental Centre for Eastern and Central Europe (Tirana, 14 December 2012);

(h) It promoted the Convention and the Protocol at two round tables of the Aarhus Convention and Nuclear Initiative (Paris, 15–16 February 2012, and Brussels, 4–5 December 2012) and the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Aarhus Convention and Nuclear Initiative (Paris, 11 July 2012);

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<sup>22</sup> ECE is the official acronym for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, whereas UNECE is used informally to avoid confusion with other regional bodies. The official name of the Strategy incorporates this informal acronym.

(i) The secretariat also promoted the Convention and its Protocol at the seventh European conference on sustainable cities and towns (Geneva, 17–18 April 2013), and has been invited to present Convention and Protocol at the High-level Seminar by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs on “E-Participation: Empowering People through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)” (Geneva, 24–26 July 2013).

30. Furthermore, to build synergies and enhance coordination with partners, the secretariat serviced the sixth and seventh meetings of the PRTR Coordinating Group (Paris, 6 October 2011 and Paris, 12 September 2012),<sup>23</sup> which were held back to back with the OECD Task Force on PRTRs. The Coordinating Group maintained continuous, close cooperation with OECD, UNEP, UNITAR, GRID-Arendal and the Global Environment Facility on PRTR-related issues. The eighth meeting of the Coordinating Group is scheduled to take place in November 2013 back to back with the third meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol. The seventh Aarhus Convention Capacity-Building Coordination meeting (Geneva, 15 June 2012), reviewed the work undertaken in this area for the Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs by the secretariat and partner organizations, and considered coordination and possible strategic directions for future capacity-building activities.<sup>24</sup>

31. A joint global round table on PRTRs, under the auspices of ECE and OECD and in cooperation with UNITAR, will take place in Geneva on 19 November 2013. The round table is expected to take stock of successes and challenges in implementing the Protocol and PRTRs systems to date in order to guide future action in this field. The event will be co-chaired by the Chair of the Protocol’s Meeting of the Parties and the Chair of the OECD Task Force on PRTRs.

32. The increased cooperation between the secretariat and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council during the past year is noteworthy, in particular with regard to the recently created mandate of the Independent Expert on human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment in March 2012.<sup>25</sup> Given the continued relevance of the Protocol on PRTRs, cooperation has also been promoted with the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes<sup>26</sup> and with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, who examines, among others, the issue of participation of persons living in poverty.<sup>27</sup>

33. In addition, section B above lists capacity-building activities, including side events and subregional workshops, undertaken to promote the Protocol.

### **Reports articles and outreach**

34. The secretariat engaged in an enhanced outreach exercise, distributing materials and informational messages via e-mail about the PRTR Protocol to national focal points, national bar associations, judicial training centres, Aarhus Centres, national and European consumer authorities, national and European Ombudsmen, national financing and development aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions in the ECE region. For example, joint ECE, OECD and UNITAR messages on

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/intlgimages/about.html>

<sup>24</sup> More information about activities carried out by partner organizations can be found in the report on capacity-building (ECE/MR.PPR/2011/8), available from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop4/mop4.doc.html>

<sup>25</sup> See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/IEEnvironment/Pages/IEEnvironmentIndex.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/ToxicWastes/Pages/SRToxicWastesIndex.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/SRExtremePovertyIndex.aspx>

electronic tools for PRTRs were distributed to national focal points and stakeholders on 25 April 2012 and 3 May 2013.

35. The secretariat promoted the Protocol through various reports and articles prepared under the auspices of ECE and partner organizations (e.g., *Strengthening Water Management and Transboundary Water Cooperation in Central Asia* (ECE/MP.WAT/35), the ECE 2011 and 2012 Annual Reports, OSCE publications and a fact sheet on participation of civil society and business in greening the economy prepared for the Astana Ministerial Conference).

36. The secretariat submitted a technical article, “Pollutant release and transfer registers: a cross-cutting instrument to address climate change and eco-toxic releases”, to the International Conference on Environmental Pollution and Remediation (28–30 August 2012).

37. It also provided a contribution to a new edition of the ECE/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations sourcebook, *International Forest Sector Institutions and Policy Instruments for Europe* (forthcoming) on how the Convention and its Protocol encompass forest-related issues.

38. The secretariat contributed information on PRTR and Aarhus electronic tools to the ECE report to the World Summit on the Information Society Forum (Geneva, 13–17 May 2012). Additional information and updates were included in the ECE submission prepared as an input to the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (A/68/65-E/2013/11), submitted to the sixteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (Geneva, 3–7 June 2013).

39. Two leaflets on the Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs were also produced in English, French and Spanish and distributed at Rio+20, and copies were made available on the ECE publications web page.<sup>28</sup>

40. In 2013, the secretariat provided information on the Protocol to OECD, which is currently developing a guidance document on PRTR elements.

41. In addition, section B above describes guidance materials that involve awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol, as well as electronic tools that have been used to facilitate the collection, dissemination and exchange of information related to PRTRs and the Protocol.

### **Communications strategy**

42. At its first meeting, the Protocol’s Working Group of the Parties welcomed the communication strategy for the Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.2)<sup>29</sup> and committed to implementing it. The aim of the communications strategy is to provide national focal points, environmental NGOs and other stakeholders with options for communication activities on these instruments. The work activities outlined in this section are in line with the communications strategy. A survey was conducted to evaluate whether current communication activities were perceived as relevant and successful by countries and stakeholders, and in what areas there was a need for improvement. The results of the survey were included in a note that was submitted to the Bureau for its information (PRTR/WG.1/2013/Inf.2).

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<sup>28</sup> “PRTRs advancing sustainability, environmental governance and a green economy” and “Aarhus Returns to Rio” are available from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/publications.html>

<sup>29</sup> Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=25026>

## **F. Coordination and oversight of intersessional activities**

43. Coordination and oversight of intersessional activities under the Protocol are carried out via meetings of the Working Group of the Parties, meetings of the Bureau, as necessary, and consultations among Bureau members using e-mail.

44. The secretariat serviced the first meeting of the Bureau (Geneva, 14 January 2011), the second meeting (Geneva, 29 November 2011), the third meeting (Brussels, 8 June 2012), the fourth meeting (Geneva, 21 November 2012) and the fifth meeting (Madrid, 2–3 July 2013), and coordinated a number of e-mail consultations among the Bureau members. It also serviced the first and second meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol held in Geneva in 2011 and 2012.

## **G. Technical assessment of provisions of the Protocol**

45. Technical assessment of the provisions of the Protocol involves the drafting of recommendations on technical issues to the Meeting of the Parties, based on the assessment report(s). The method of work for this activity is meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol, electronic consultation and drafting of assessment report(s) on experience gained in the development of national PRTRs according to article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol.

46. The first meeting of the Working Group of the Parties agreed that no amendments to the provisions of the Protocol were needed at that time, and that experience needed to be gathered before such a review should take place. Technical assessment of the provisions of the Protocol has therefore not yet been implemented.

## **H. Horizontal support areas**

47. During 2011–2013, the objective of horizontal support areas was to provide overall support that covered multiple substantive areas of the work programme, *inter alia*, through secretarial support and staff training.

## Annex

### Overview of contributions and expenditures

#### I. General considerations

1. In 2012 the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs observed caution in its allocation of resources, mainly owing to the fact that many contributions were made towards the end of the year, thus creating uncertainty as to the availability of sufficient funds. The secretariat made various efforts to encourage in-kind contributions and thereby reduce the impact on the trust fund. The same policy applies for 2013 since, as of 1 June 2013, a limited number of countries have submitted or pledged contributions for 2013. The secretariat will continue pursuing synergies with other ECE MEAs, United Nations agencies and other partners in order to maintain a satisfactory number of activities and share implementation costs.

2. For the sustainability of work it is crucial to ensure staff funding on a long-term basis. The extension of contracts for staff funded from the trust fund depends on the level of contributions received. Since the current financial scheme is based on voluntary contributions and provides no guidance on their amount, the level of contributions fluctuates, making the funding of extrabudgetary posts unpredictable and far from secure. The secretariat therefore was obliged to give priority to securing funds, which need to be reserved at least for one year before issuing a staff contract. The secretariat was able to allocate sufficient funds for staff and for activities in the first part of 2013 only due to savings accumulated as of 31 December 2012.

3. In the reporting period of this overview, the secretariat completed recruitment of staff for a P-3 fixed-term extrabudgetary position servicing the Protocol.<sup>a</sup>

#### II. Contributions

4. The “adjusted contribution” columns in tables A and B below are intended to offer a more realistic picture of the actual resources available for use in a given year. Contributions by Parties and Signatories are often intended for use in a year other than the year the contribution was deposited and/or received. The adjusted contribution figure in a given year is derived from the actual contribution in that year, minus any part of that contribution that was intended for use in a different year, plus any contributions made in years other than the reference year but intended for use in the reference year. Due to the lack of timely funding for any specific year, the secretariat is obliged to use the available funds, as necessary.

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<sup>a</sup> One staff member responsible for electronic information tools and the Protocol on PRTRs left the secretariat in early March 2013 for personal reasons. The related work is temporarily carried out by a P-2 staff member.

## A. Contributions received in 2012 and for 2012 as of 10 July 2013

(in United States dollars)

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Actual contribution in 2012</i>	<i>Adjusted contribution for 2012</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Albania	3 000	3 000	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	1 000	—	For Protocol on PTRRs 2011
	—	3 000	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012, received in 2013
Armenia	300	300	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Austria	12 920	12 920	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	5 103	5 103	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
Belarus	290	290	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Belgium (Federal)	28 571	28 571	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Belgium (Brussels)	1 175	1 175	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Belgium (Flanders)	8 499	8 499	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Belgium (Wallonia)	4 310	4 310	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	6 468	6 468	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
Bulgaria	8 712	—	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	—	8 712	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2011
	500	500	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
Croatia	3 000	3 000	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	3 000	3 000	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
Cyprus	649	—	For Protocol on PTRRs, year unspecified
	200	—	For Aarhus Convention, year unspecified
Czech Republic	15 000	—	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	10 000	—	For Protocol on PTRRs 2013
	10 000	10 000	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
	—	15 000	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2011
Denmark	43 290	—	For Aarhus Convention, received in 2012 for years 2013–2014
	21 645	—	For Protocol on PTRRs, received in 2012 for years 2013–2014
	—	22 390	For Aarhus Convention, received in 2011 for years 2010–2012 (full amount 67,170); annualized for 2012
	—	11 190	For Protocol on PTRRs, received in 2011 for years 2010–2012 (full amount 33,570); annualized for 2012
Estonia	1 299	1 299	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	519	519	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
European Union	128 700	128 700	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	13 646	13 646	For Protocol on PTRRs 2012
Finland	6 623	6 623	For Aarhus Convention 2012

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Actual contribution in 2012</i>	<i>Adjusted contribution for 2012</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
France	87 131	87 131	For Aarhus Convention 2012, out of which 20% for public participation in international forums (PPIF)
	51 948	51 948	For Aarhus Convention 2012, including for PPIF
	38 961	38 961	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Georgia	250	250	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Germany	60 000	60 000	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Hungary	5 000	—	For Aarhus Convention 2011
	500	—	For Protocol on PRTRs 2011, first instalment for years 2011–2012
	—	4 981	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
	—	481	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012, second instalment for years 2011–2012 ; received in 2013
Ireland	6 435	—	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	—	6 667	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2011
	3 886	3 886	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Italy	134 048	134 048	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Kazakhstan	19 975	19 975	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Kyrgyzstan	600	600	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Latvia	2 574	—	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	1 287	1 287	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
	—	2 736	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2011
Lithuania		200	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs 2012 received in 2013
Netherlands	24 845	24 845	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	24 845	24 845	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Norway	35 270	35 270	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	19 985	19 985	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	65 560	—	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs, received in 2012 for 2013
	—	62 222	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs, received in 2011 for 2012
	17 635	17 635	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
	19 985	19 985	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Poland	6 435	6 435	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Republic of Moldova	—	1 294	For Aarhus Convention 2012 received in 2013
Serbia	—	500	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
Slovakia	987	987	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	649	649	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Slovenia	—	654	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012 received in 2013
Sweden	20 000	20 000	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	3 975	3 975	For Aarhus Convention 2012 (promotion of the Convention's compliance mechanism at Rio+20)

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Actual contribution in 2012</i>	<i>Adjusted contribution for 2012</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
	3 975	3 975	For Aarhus Convention 2012
	5 000	5 000	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Switzerland	75 594	75 594	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012, out of which US\$ 53,996 to support capacity-building activities for countries with economies in transition
Tajikistan	200	200	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Turkmenistan	—	350	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
Ukraine	3 896	3 896	For Aarhus Convention 2012
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	47 544	47 544	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs 2012
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 127 394</b>	<b>1 087 206</b>	
of which explicitly for the Protocol	260 872	242 403	

## B. Contributions received in 2013 and for 2013 as of 10 July 2013

(in United States dollars)

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Actual contribution in 2013</i>	<i>Adjusted contribution for 2013</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Albania	3 000	—	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Austria	13 263	13 263	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	4 979	4 979	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013
Belgium (Brussels)	1 216	1 216	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Belgium (Federal)	28 683	28 683	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Belgium (Flanders)	8 499	8 499	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Belgium (Wallonia)	6 806	6 806	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013
	4 425	4 425	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Bulgaria	—	8 712	For Aarhus Convention 2013, received in 2012
Czech Republic	—	15 000	For Aarhus Convention 2013, received in 2012
	—	10 000	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013, received in 2012
Denmark	—	21 645	For Aarhus Convention, received in 2012 for years 2013–2014 (full amount 43,290); annualized for 2013
	—	10 823	For Protocol on PRTRs received in 2012 for years 2013–2014 (full amount 21,645); annualized for 2013
Estonia	1 277	1 277	For Aarhus Convention 2013
European Union	129 366	129 366	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Finland	6 784	6 784	For Aarhus Convention 2013

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Actual contribution in 2013</i>	<i>Adjusted contribution for 2013</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
France	83 014	83 014	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Georgia	250	250	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Germany	60 000	60 000	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Greece	1 000	—	For Aarhus Convention 2011, received in 2013
Hungary	4 981	—	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
	481	—	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012, second instalment for years 2011–2012; received in 2013
Ireland	—	6 435	For Aarhus Convention 2013, received in 2012
Italy	127 714	127 714	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Kazakhstan	19 975	19 975	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Latvia	—	2 574	For Aarhus Convention 2013, received in 2012
Lithuania	200	—	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Norway	—	65 560	For Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs, received in 2012 for 2013
	19 985	19 985	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	19 985	19 985	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013, received in 2012
Poland	6 631	6 631	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Republic of Moldova	1 294	1 294	For Aarhus Convention 2013
Republic of Moldova	1 294	—	For Aarhus Convention 2012
Serbia	500	—	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
Slovenia	654	654	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013
Slovenia	654	—	For Protocol on PRTRs 2012
Sweden	20 000	20 000	For Aarhus Convention 2013
	5 000	5 000	For Protocol on PRTRs 2013
Turkmenistan	350	—	For Aarhus Convention 2010, received in 2013
	350	—	For Aarhus Convention 2011, received in 2013
	350	—	For Aarhus Convention 2012, received in 2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>582 960</b>	<b>710 549</b>	
of which explicitly for the Protocol	41 559	58 247	

*Note:* As of 1 June 2013 no financial contributions, in-kind contributions and/or pledges had been received from the following Parties to the Convention for either 2012 or 2013: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. As of 1 June 2013 no financial contributions, in-kind contributions and/or pledges had been received from the following Parties to the Protocol for either 2012 or 2013: Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Israel and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

### C. In-kind contributions

5. In addition to the in-kind contributions reported at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9), the following in-kind contributions were also made for:

- (a) The organization of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, provided by the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OSCE, where several side events dedicated to the Protocol were organized;
- (b) The participation of NGOs in the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, for which the Government of Italy provided €7,000;
- (c) A side event on the Protocol on PRTRs during the Astana Ministerial Conference, provided by the Government of Kazakhstan and OSCE;
- (d) The organization of the subregional workshop on the Protocol for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, provided by the Government of Belarus;
- (e) The translation into Russian of the simplified PRTR guide, provided by the Government of Belarus;
- (f) The translation into Spanish and publishing of the full *Guidance on Implementation for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers*, provided by the Central American Commission on Environment and Development and financed by the Government of Spain;
- (g) The hosting of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy and the PRTR.net portals in 2012, provided by GRID-Arendal;
- (h) Support for the travel of the secretariat to the second South-Eastern Europe Regional Coordination meeting (Sarajevo, 5–6 December 2011), provided by OSCE;
- (i) Support for the organization of a subregional meeting for Central Asian countries in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 22–23 May 2012, provided by OSCE;
- (j) Support from the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Poland and Mongolia and by UNDP Mongolia to the ECE mission to promote the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol in Mongolia (25–26 April 2012);
- (k) Promotion of the Protocol on PRTRs in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, by the Government of Spain.
- (l) Support for the travel of the secretariat to the first meeting of the focal points of the 10 signatory countries of the Declaration on the Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration (Santiago, 6–7 November 2012), and the follow-up meeting with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Government of Chile (Santiago, 8 November 2012), provided by ECLAC;
- (m) Support from OSCE for the organization of, as well as the travel of a number of participants to, the subregional workshop, “Get Your Right to a Healthy Community”, on the promotion of the ratification and implementation of the Protocol on PRTRs in South-Eastern Europe and Israel (Sarajevo 28–29 May 2013);
- (n) Support provided by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the organization of the 2013 workshop in Sarajevo mentioned above.

### III. Estimated expenditures<sup>b</sup>

#### A. Estimated expenditures in January-December 2012 for the Protocol on PRTRs

(in United States dollars)

Description	Expenditures	Remarks
P-3: electronic information tools, Clearinghouse; PRTR.net, Protocol on PRTRs (60%)	85 164	Staff costs for January-July 2012 and November-December 2012
P-2: electronic information tools, Clearinghouse; PRTR.net, Protocol on PRTRs (60%)	25 896	Staff costs for July-October 2012
Travel of experts	22 230	e.g., Protocol Working Group of the Parties, Protocol Bureau
Travel of staff on official business	3 452	e.g., to service the Bureau meeting in Brussels, to service the International Coordinating Group on PRTRs in Paris
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>136 742</b>	
13% programme support	17 776	
<b>Total</b>	<b>154 519</b>	

#### B. Projected expenditures for 2013 for the Protocol on PRTRs

(in United States dollars)

Description	Expenditures	Remarks
P-3: electronic information tools, Clearinghouse; PRTR.net, Protocol on PRTRs (80%)	102 000	Staff costs for January-February 2013 and September-December 2013
P-2: electronic information tools, Clearinghouse; PRTR.net, Protocol on PRTRs (80%)	51 840	Staff costs for March-September 2013
Travel of experts	40 000	e.g., Protocol Working Group of the Parties, Protocol Bureau, subregional workshop
Travel of staff on official business	2 000	e.g., servicing the Bureau meeting, possible missions
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>195 840</b>	
13% programme support	25 460	
<b>Total</b>	<b>221 300</b>	

<sup>b</sup> The estimated costs shown here are limited to those intended to be covered by voluntary contributions made under the Convention's and Protocol's schemes of financial arrangements through the trust fund. They do not include costs that are expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget. In addition to the staff included in the following table, the salary and other entitlements of one staff member in the General Service category is covered by the 13 per cent programme support costs levied from the trust funds of the ECE Environment Division. Figures are rounded up. They may change in accordance with United Nations administrative regulations.

#### IV. Pledges (as of 1 June 2013)

<i>Donor country</i>	<i>Original currency</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Belarus	USD	300	Aarhus Convention 2013
Hungary	USD	5 000	Aarhus Convention 2013
Hungary	USD	500	Protocol on PRTRs 2013
Romania	USD	1 333	Aarhus Convention 2012
Romania	USD	1 333	Aarhus Convention 2013
Romania	USD	1 333	Aarhus Convention 2014
United Kingdom	USD	45 317	Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs 2013