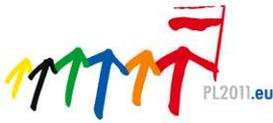


Brussels, 23 November 2011



**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the  
UNECE Protocol on PRTR to the Aarhus Convention  
First session (Geneva 28-29 November 2011)  
– Item 6: Possible technical assistance mechanism**

**Draft position of the EU and its Member States**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We consider the results of the questionnaire as a valuable collection of information on capacity-building activities on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers as well as on barriers to the implementation of the PRTR Protocol. These results can help to identify solutions and actions to overcome existing obstacles faced by the Parties and Signatories to the Protocol and other UNECE Member States.

We believe that most of the proposed solutions for overcoming obstacles should be provided through the existing arrangements based on voluntary funding. The survey revealed that the Signatories and Parties to the Protocol that had already implemented the Protocol expected only minor improvements to the already existing systems.

The questionnaire on the possible solutions for overcoming obstacles proposes a number of options. While we look favorably on most of them and consider that they could even be combined, we have serious reservations on the option of establishing a separate capacity-building fund for supporting the PRTRs development. Therefore the European Union and its Member States cannot support that idea.

The establishment of a separate capacity-building fund based on voluntary contributions as proposed by the Secretariat in 2008 duplicates the general voluntary funding that currently exists for the Protocol and is therefore not acceptable at this stage. Therefore we propose to continue the capacity-building activities in the current and future work programme on technical assistance for those countries that have not yet implemented the PRTR Protocol, *inter alia* by increasing cooperation with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

At the same time, we need to identify alternative and innovative sources of financing and increase the incentives for enhanced participation of the private sector. Moreover we need to be more prudent in the use of available funds.

Finally, we would like to note that many activities supporting the implementation of the PRTR Protocol in countries in need have been already carried out. We believe that it is important to support countries *inter alia* by twinning, by sharing the expertise of more advanced UNECE Member States with countries with economies in transition, and through activities such as the subregional workshop "Get your right to a healthy community", the side event: "Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers: An efficient tool for sustainable water management" held at the 7<sup>th</sup> Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Astana or the preparation of guidance materials like: "A simplified guide to the PRTR".

Thank you for your attention

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