The first meeting of the Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) established under the auspices of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention was held on 16-18 February 2004 with the mandate to pave the way for the entry into force and implementation of the Protocol. Mr. Kaj Bärlund, Director of the UNECE Environment and Human Settlements Division, opened the meeting by reminding the Working Group that the establishment of pollution registers would be a major challenge in many countries, requiring support through capacity building, exchange of know-how, transfer of technology and financial assistance.

The Working Group requested that UNITAR, UNEP, OECD and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, and any other organizations involved in PRTR capacity-building work, provide the secretariat with a list of their organizations' capacity building projects related to PRTR.

Recipient countries were also invited to present ideas and proposals that are focused on the Protocol to the secretariat.

The secretariat will compile a complete list of organizations' and recipient countries' capacity building projects, and their ideas and proposals focused on the Protocol.

While the Working Group recognized that the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol would not take place for a number of years, it agreed to start the preparatory work by asking the secretariat to prepare an 'options' paper on developing rules of procedure and a compliance mechanism for the Protocol - a key issue being how closely these should correspond to those of the Convention, given that the Protocol is open to accession by non-Parties to the Convention.

Please see the documents of the first meeting. Guidance on implementation of Protocol to be developed The Working Group also agreed upon a structured outline of a guidance document to guide implementation of the Protocol. It requested that, subject to funding, a first draft of the guidance document be ready in time for its next meeting and translated in time for distribution four weeks in advance of the meeting.

Other outcomes of the first meeting

The European ECO Forum presented a declaration on necessary steps for improving public participation in the implementation of the Kiev Protocol on PRTR, a key issue for the non-governmental representatives attending the meeting.

The representative of the European Commission presented the Commission's plans to extend the European Pollution Emission Register to a fully-fledged European PRTR conforming to the requirements of the Protocol by 2006, at which point the European Community would be in a position to ratify the Protocol. The first reporting year under the 'European-PRTR' would be 2007.

The timing of ratification by the European Commission could be seen as potentially influencing the timing of ratification by EU countries and accession states, and therefore as providing a hint of when the Protocol might enter into force. Sixteen states must ratify the Protocol for it to enter into force.

Mr. Karel Blaha (Czech Republic), who chaired the negotiating process for the Protocol, was elected as Chairman, and Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium) and Mr. Muzafar Isobaev (Tajikistan) were elected as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, the latter for a term of office up to the second meeting of the Working Group in early 2005.

Document Title	ENG	FRE	RUS
Provisional Agenda MP.PP/AC.1/2004/1	PDF	PDF	PDF
Report of the meeting MP.PP/AC.1/2004/2	PDF	PDF	PDF
List of Participants	PDF	---	---

Informal documents of the first meeting

Needs and prospects for capacity building, technical support and information exchange in PRTR development (revised 22 March 2004)	ENG

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In the table above, links to documents appear using the following abbreviations and icons:

File formats: = pdf file; = MS Word file; = MS PowerPoint presentetion file;
Languages: ENG – English; FRE – French; RUS – Russian
Documents available for downloading are indicated in blue typeface: ENG FRE RUS.