

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

Bureau

Seventeenth meeting

Online, 16 June 2020

Report of the seventeenth meeting of the Bureau¹

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden, Chair), Ms. Marie-Rose van den Hende (Belgium, Vice-Chair), Ms. Ulrike Schüler (Germany, Vice-Chair), Mr. Alex Radway (European Union), and Mr. Roland Ritter (Switzerland).

Observers: Ms. Mara Silina (European ECO-Forum).

Apologies: Ms. Lesya Karnaukh (Ukraine), Mr. Nebojsa Redzic (Serbia).

II. Opening and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair opened the meeting highlighting that the major aim of the meeting was to discuss and finalise documents for the upcoming eighth meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 16-17 December 2020). The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda.

III. Status of ratification of the Protocol

2. The Bureau took note of the report by the secretariat, which confirmed that since the seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 28-29 November 2019), Kazakhstan had ratified the Protocol on 24 January 2020. The Bureau welcomed the new Party.

IV. Designation of national focal points

3. The Bureau took note of the report by the secretariat regarding nominations of national focal points. The Bureau expressed its concerns with regard to pending nominations for Spain and the United Kingdom, and requested the secretariat to follow-up on the matter with the respective Parties.

V. Implementation of the work programme for 2015-2017

4. The Bureau took note of the reports by the secretariat on the implementation of the Protocol's work programme for 2018-2021 and on financial matters, and requested the secretariat to update and submit the documents to the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.

¹ This document was not formally edited.

VI. Development of the Protocol

5. Pursuant to the request of the Working Group of the Parties at its seventh meeting², the Bureau completed the first draft of the report and requested the secretariat to distribute it for comments to Parties and stakeholders with a view to finalizing the next draft for submission to the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.

VII. Preparations for the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties

(a) Provisional agenda of the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties

6. The Bureau considered and approved the provisional agenda for the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties and requested the secretariat to finalise the document and submit it to the meeting.

(b) Compliance and reporting mechanisms

7. The Bureau took note of the outcomes of the eighth meeting of the Compliance Committee (online, 30-31 March 2020)³.

8. The Bureau considered and approved draft decision on reporting requirements, and requested the secretariat to finalise it and submit it to the Working Group of the Parties at its eighth meeting.

(c) Future work programme

9. The Bureau considered and approved, as revised at the meeting, a draft decision on the work programme for 2022-2025 and requested the secretariat to finalise it and submit it to the Working Group of the Parties at its eighth meeting.

(d) Financial arrangements

10. The Bureau considered and approved a draft decision on financial arrangements and requested the secretariat to finalise it and submit it to the Working Group of the Parties at its eighth meeting.

VIII. Preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

11. The Bureau considered the draft outline of the agenda of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Protocol and requested the secretariat to revise the document on the basis of the comments provided at the meeting and to send it to the Bureau for approval after the meeting with a view to finalizing the next draft for submission to the eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties. The Bureau confirmed its support to a joint high-level segment with the Convention's Meeting of the Parties, which will be dedicated to the role of the Convention and the Protocol with regard to sustainable infrastructure and spatial planning. With regard to the Protocol on PRTRs, the Bureau requested the secretariat to collect relevant examples of countries and stakeholders that could demonstrate such a role.

12. The Bureau also agreed to follow the same, as for the previous MOPs approach, to preparing a draft Declaration for the high-level segment, and agreed on the following tentative schedule in this regard:

- Chairs of the Convention's and Protocol's MOPs, with the assistance of the secretariat, will prepare the first draft outline of the Declaration and send it to the two Bureaux for email consultation to be completed by mid-October 2020;
- The draft outline of the Declaration, revised by the Chairs, will be distributed to the Convention's and Protocol's Parties and stakeholders for comments with the deadline to respond by mid-

² See section VI (B): https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/prtr/WGP-7/AEC/ECE.MP.PRTR.WG.1.2019.2_aec.pdf

³ See: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/prtr/Compliance_Committee/8th_CC_PRTR/ece.mp.prtr.c.1.2020.2.e.pdf

November 2020, and submitted to the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties for its consideration (16-17 December 2020);

- Protocol's Bureau will meet back to back with the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties in December 2020 to revise the draft Declaration, as needed, for sending it to the Convention's Bureau for consideration;

- Convention's Bureau will revise the draft Declaration, as needed, for its submission to the 25st meeting of the Convention's Working Group of the Parties (date tbc) and for comments by Parties and stakeholders;

- Chairs of the Convention's and the Protocol's MOPs will liaise, with the assistance of the secretariat, on the finalization of the draft Declaration after the 25st meeting of the Convention's Working Group of the Parties, for its submission to the high-level segment of the two Meetings of the Parties.

13. The Bureau also confirmed that the fourth session should be held in the week of 18 October 2021 and it welcomed the offer of Georgia to host the events.

14. Furthermore, the Bureau considered contingency planning in the context of COVID-19 pandemic and its possible effect on in-person meetings. The secretariat informed that current planning foresees in-person format for the upcoming meetings. In case this will not be feasible, options for consideration include (a) to postpone them; or (b) to organize partly virtual (hybrid) meetings. It was stressed that holding meetings in virtual or hybrid formats poses several challenges, including ensuring proper interpretation services and proper and effective proceedings.

IX. Calendar of meetings

15. The Bureau took note of the following upcoming meetings:

- 16-17 December 2020, Geneva – fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs;

- 17 December 2020, Geneva – eighteenth meeting of the Bureau of the Protocol on PRTRs;

- 27-29 January 2021, Paris – thirteenth meeting of the International PRTR Coordinating Group and the third meeting of the OECD Working Group on PRTRs.
