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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

Third session

Budva, Montenegro, 15 September 2017

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its third session

Addendum

Decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties

Contents

<i>Decisions</i>	<i>Page</i>
III/1. Reporting requirements	2
III/2. Work programme for 2018–2021 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers	4
Annex: Work programme for 2018–2021	6
III/3. Financial arrangements under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.....	10

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Decision III/1 Reporting requirements

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2, of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, which states, inter alia, that the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol shall keep under continuous review the implementation and development of the Protocol on the basis of regular reporting by the Parties and, with this purpose in mind, will establish guidelines facilitating reporting by the Parties, taking into account the experience gained under the Convention,

Also recalling its decision I/5, through which the Parties established a reporting mechanism to monitor the progress in implementation of the provisions of the Protocol,

Recognizing that regular reporting by Parties provides important contextual information which facilitates the assessment of compliance under the Protocol and thereby contributes to the work of the Compliance Committee,

Believing that public involvement in the process of reporting is likely to improve the quality and accuracy of reports and to strengthen the credibility of the reporting process,

Taking into account the objective of a simple, concise and not excessively burdensome reporting mechanism,

Noting that this decision concerns reporting by Parties on how they have implemented the requirements of the Protocol and is distinct from the reporting required under article 7 of the Protocol,

Considering that the reporting procedure as set out in decision I/5 should continue to apply for the next reporting cycle,

Emphasizing the importance of timely submission of reports,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the implementation reports submitted by more than 90 per cent 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 pursuant to decision I/5;

2. *Welcomes* the synthesis report on the Protocol's implementation prepared by the Bureau and the Compliance Committee on the basis of the national reports;¹

3. *Considers* that these reports provide a valuable overview of the status of implementation of the Protocol, as well as significant trends and challenges, which will help to guide future activities;

Timely submission of reports

4. *Notes* that some Parties that submitted reports did not do so within the deadline indicated in decision I/5;

5. *Reiterates its encouragement* of Parties to start the preparation of national implementation reports in future reporting cycles sufficiently in advance of, and at the latest seven months before, the deadline for submission of the reports to the secretariat set out in decision I/5, with a view of ensuring meaningful public consultation on the reports at the national level;

¹ ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/10.

Failure to submit reports

6. *Notes with regret* that Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia and Ukraine, all of which were Parties to the Protocol at the time of the deadline for submission of the implementation reports, failed to submit reports;

7. *Calls upon* those Parties that have not yet submitted their national implementation reports to submit them to the secretariat as soon as possible but at the latest by 15 November 2017, for subsequent consideration, inter alia, by the Compliance Committee;

Public Consultation

8. *Welcomes* the fact that most Parties prepared their reports through a process involving consultations with various governmental agencies as well as civil society;

9. *Requests* each Party to prepare its reports on implementation of the Protocol through a transparent and consultative process involving the public in a timely manner, taking account of specific circumstances pertaining to regional economic integration organizations;

Guidance on reporting requirements

10. *Also requests* each Party to submit to the secretariat, in advance of each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties so as to arrive no later than nine months before the session of the Meeting of the Parties for which it is submitted, a report on:

(a) The necessary legislative, regulatory or other measures that it has taken to implement the provisions of the Protocol;

(b) The practical implementation of these measures at the national or, in the case of regional integration organizations, the regional level, using the format set out in the annex to decision I/5;

11. *Further requests* each Party in advance of each subsequent ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties to review its report and to prepare and submit to the secretariat new information and, where available, a consolidated national implementation report;

12. *Encourages* Parties to take the guidance for reporting on implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers² into consideration when preparing national implementation reports.

13. *Requests* Parties, signatories and other States to submit implementation reports through the electronic reporting application developed by the secretariat, and in accordance with the instructions provided by the secretariat.

14. *Decides* to discontinue submission of hard copies of the reports to the secretariat;

15. *Requests* the secretariat to circulate to all Parties and relevant stakeholders a formal reminder of the reporting requirements, including guidance on the preparation of the reports, the proposed timing and confirmation of the date for the submission of the reports to the secretariat in accordance with decision I/5, at least one year in advance of the next session of the Meeting of the Parties;

² ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6/Add.3.

16. *Invites* signatories and other States not Party to the Protocol, pending their ratification or accession, to submit reports on measures taken to apply the Protocol in accordance with the aforementioned procedures;

17. *Invites* international, regional and non-governmental organizations engaged in programmes or activities providing support to Parties and/or other States in the implementation of the Protocol to provide the secretariat with reports on their programmes or activities and lessons learned, as well as on implementation of the Protocol itself;

18. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report for each ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties summarizing the national implementation reports submitted by the Parties and identifying significant trends, challenges and solutions, and to circulate it to the Parties and other stakeholders in due time for its consideration by the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol;

Translation of the reports

19. *Also requests* the secretariat to make the reports available in the languages in which they are submitted, and to make the synthesis report available in the three ECE official languages;

20. *Encourages* Parties that are in a position to do so to provide voluntary translations of the reports in the two other ECE languages. Those Parties that do so are invited to provide the translations preferably not later than one month after the original submission deadline;

21. *Requests* the secretariat to make any unofficial translations of the reports available online.

Decision III/2 Work programme for 2018–2021 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2, of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, which requires Parties to keep under continuous review the implementation and development of the Protocol and, with this purpose in mind, *inter alia*, to establish a programme of work,

Also recalling its decision I/6 on procedures for the preparation, adoption and monitoring of work programmes and on the work programme for 2011–2014, and decision II/3 on the work programme for 2015–2017,

Taking into account the strategic plan for 2015–2020 of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers adopted through decision II/2 and the scheme of financial arrangements adopted through decision III/3,

1. *Adopts* the work programme for 2018–2021, containing the estimated costs of each activity, as set out in the annex to this decision;

2. *Agrees* upon the indicative allocation of resources and the resulting estimated costs set out in the annex, subject to annual review and, as appropriate, revision by the Working Group of the Parties on the basis of annual reports provided by the secretariat pursuant to decision III/3 on financial arrangements;

3. *Encourages* Parties to endeavour to ensure that the funding of the activities of the work programme remains stable throughout the period 2018–2021;

4. *Also encourages* Parties, insofar as possible, and subject to the internal budgetary procedures of the Parties, to contribute to the Protocol's trust fund for a given calendar year by 1 October of the preceding year, so as to secure staff costs for the smooth functioning of the secretariat, as a priority, and the timely and effective implementation of the priority activities of the work programme for 2018–2021;

5. *Requests* the Bureau and the Working Group to keep under review the activities of the work programme for the period 2018–2021, and to report thereon and make appropriate recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth ordinary session;

6. *Calls upon* the Parties and invites signatories, other States and relevant intergovernmental, regional and non-governmental organizations to contribute actively to the activities contained in the work programme;

7. *Requests* the secretariat, taking into consideration the results of the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, to prepare a draft work programme for the intersessional period following the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, including a detailed breakdown of estimated costs, for consideration and further elaboration by the Bureau and the Working Group of the Parties, at the latest three months before the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, with a view to possible its adoption at that meeting.

Annex
Work programme for 2018–2021

Activity	Objective and expected outcome	Lead country, body or organization	Method of work	Approximate time frame	Estimated costs in United States dollars per year (average) ^a		
					Item	Core requirements	Additional requirements
A. Compliance mechanism	Monitor and facilitate compliance with the Protocol	Compliance Committee	Compliance Committee to meet to review submissions, communications, etc., prepare decisions, reports and guidance material and undertake fact-finding missions; secretariat to publicize the mechanism, develop a database of cases and service the Committee	Ongoing	Committee meetings (travel + DSA)	30 000	
					Expert missions	20 000	
					Subcontracts (e.g., translations, management of electronic databases, website maintenance and improvement)	10 000	
B. Technical assistance	Assist countries in the effective implementation of the Protocol	Secretariat in close cooperation with partner organizations (e.g., UNEP, UNITAR, OSCE, Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe and European ECO Forum) in the Framework Programme on PRTR Capacity-building ^b	Specific projects in countries needing assistance; training workshops, guidance materials and technical assistance, mostly separately funded; questionnaires, analysis of results	Ongoing	Meetings, (travel + DSA for eligible participants)		30 000
					Subcontracts (e.g., preparation of guidance material, research, analytical studies)		10 000
					Expert missions		10 000
C. Information exchange on a	Monitor and facilitate the implementation of	Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol	Meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol; ad hoc expert	Ongoing	Ad hoc expert meetings (travel + DSA for eligible participants)		30 000

Activity	Objective and expected outcome	Lead country, body or organization	Method of work	Approximate time frame	Estimated costs in United States dollars per year (average) ^a		
					Item	Core requirements	Additional requirements
technical level	the Protocol		meetings and missions; use of electronic tools including the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy, the PRTR capacity-building database, PRTR.net and the PRTR:Learn website		Subcontracts (e.g., maintenance and improvement of PRTR-related databases and other electronic tools)	20 000	
					Expert missions		10 000
D. Reporting mechanism	Monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Protocol; facilitate reporting, review of compliance and experience	Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol Secretariat, enlisting expert and administrative support as necessary Compliance Committee	Meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol; use of the e-reporting tool; preparation and processing of national implementation reports; analysis of reports and preparation of a synthesis report	Ongoing	Subcontracts (e.g., preparation of background material; maintenance and development of online applications for reporting)	20 000	
E. Awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol and its interlinkages with other treaties and processes	Further the knowledge of the Protocol throughout the ECE region and beyond, increase the number of Parties to the Protocol; further the application of the Protocol in the context of other MEAs and related processes (e.g., OECD, SAICM/ICCM,	Secretariat in cooperation with all other partners	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 website; write and review articles on the Protocol	Ongoing	Participation in relevant events where funding is not provided for by the organizers (travel + DSA)	10 000	10 000

Activity	Objective and expected outcome	Lead country, body or organization	Method of work	Approximate time frame	Estimated costs in United States dollars per year (average) ^a		
					Item	Core requirements	Additional requirements
	UNEMG, IOMC)						
					Subcontracts (e.g., organization of outreach campaigns)		10 000
F. Coordination and oversight of intersessional activities, organization of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties	Coordination and oversight of the activities under the Protocol, i.e., through the implementation of this programme of work	Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol and the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties	Meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol; meetings of the Bureau as necessary; consultations among Bureau members using electronic means; session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol	Ongoing	Expert and secretariat travel and DSA, subcontracts (e.g., translations, promotional material, preparatory background material, reports and studies, media coverage of events)	100 000	
G. Technical assessment of provisions of the Protocol	Drafting of recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties on technical issues, based on the assessment and implementation reports	Secretariat; Compliance Committee; Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol	Meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol and electronic consultation; drafting of assessment report(s) on experience gained in the development of national PRTRs according to article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, as appropriate, and implementation reports	Ongoing	Subcontracts (draft recommendations on technical issues)	10 000	
H. Horizontal support areas	Overall support that covers multiple substantive areas of the work programme	Secretariat	Secretarial support, staff training, equipment	Ongoing	Staff training	2 000	
Subtotal (activities)						222 000	110 000

Activity	Objective and expected outcome	Lead country, body or organization	Method of work	Estimated costs in United States dollars per year (average) ^a			
				Approximate time frame	Item	Core requirements	Additional requirements
Staff requirements:							
	One P-3 ^c full time					180 000	
	One G-4 ^d					28 800	
Subtotal (staff requirements)						208 800	
Programme Support Costs (13%)						56 004	14 300
Grand total						486 804	124 300

Abbreviations: DSA = daily subsistence allowance; ECE = United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; ICCM = International Conference on Chemicals Management; IOMC = Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals; MEAs = multilateral environmental agreements; OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; OSCE = Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; PRTR = pollutant release and transfer register; SAICM = Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management; UNEMG = United Nations Environment Management Group; UNEP = United Nations Environment Programme; UNITAR = United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

^a The estimated costs shown here are limited to those intended to be covered by voluntary contributions made under the Protocol's scheme of financial arrangements, either through its trust fund or in kind. They do not include costs that are expected to be covered by the United Nations regular budget or other sources. Figures are rounded up. They may change in accordance with the United Nations administrative regulations.

^b See <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/public-participation/protocol-on-prtrs/areas-of-work/envppprtrcb/framework-programme-on-prtr-capacity-building.html>.

^c One P-3 Environmental Affairs Officer servicing all activities under the Protocol on PRTRs. If no provision is made under the United Nations regular budget for this post, it will require extrabudgetary funding. Where extrabudgetary contributions are insufficient to cover this post full time, the associated costs will be paid for from the contributions for the activities under the Convention (e.g., electronic information tools).

^d As of 1 February 2016, the funding of one administrative staff member through the 13 per cent programme support costs, levied from the trust funds of the ECE Environment Division, was discontinued. This staff member is required in order to provide the necessary administrative support to activities under the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol, including administrative arrangements for the meetings of the governing and subsidiary bodies of the two treaties. The costs will be distributed between the contributions to the Aarhus Convention (70%) and the Protocol (30%).

Decision III/3

Financial arrangements under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

The Meeting of the Parties

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2 (h), of 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 (Aarhus Convention), which states that the Meeting of the Parties may consider establishing financial arrangements on a consensus basis to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol,

Also recalling decisions I/3 and II/4 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, establishing an interim voluntary scheme of contributions to be sustained by contributions from Parties, signatories and other States having opted to participate in the scheme,

Recognizing the need to:

(a) Ensure that sufficient resources are available to implement the Protocol's work programme for 2018–2021, adopted through decision III/2;

(b) Establish a scheme of financial contributions that is transparent and accessible to all Parties, signatories and other States and organizations wishing to contribute;

(c) Establish financial arrangements under the Protocol that will ensure stable and predictable sources of funding, based on the principles of an equitable sharing of the burden, accountability and sound financial management,

Believing also that some organizations and non-State entities, such as charitable foundations, may be interested in contributing financially to the activities under the Protocol's work programme and should be encouraged to do so,

Noting with regret that most of contributions are still arriving late and that the financial burden has not been evenly distributed, with several Parties and signatories not contributing at all,

Believing that the financial arrangements in place under the Protocol will need to be kept under periodic review by the Meeting of the Parties to ensure that they continue to meet the goals of stability, predictability and an equitable sharing of the burden,

1. *Decides* to continue maintaining the interim voluntary scheme of contributions as reflected in decision II/4 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol³ aimed at covering the costs of activities under the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, based on the following principles:

(a) The Parties shall collectively ensure that the costs of the activities of the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget are covered through the financial scheme;

(b) No Party or signatory is expected to contribute less than 500 United States dollars to the Protocol's work programme for a given calendar year;

³ See ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1.

(c) Contributions shall be made in cash and shall not be earmarked for a particular activity;

(d) Additional contributions may be made in cash or in kind, and may be earmarked for a particular activity;

(e) Contributions in cash shall be made through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe trust fund for local technical cooperation (Aarhus Convention/Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers project);

(f) Insofar as possible, and subject to the internal budgetary procedures of the Parties, contributions for a given calendar year should preferably be made by 1 October of the preceding year, so as to secure payment of staff costs for the smooth functioning of the secretariat, as a priority, and the timely and effective implementation of the priority activities of the respective programme of work;

(g) Parties pledge, where possible prior to the adoption of a work programme by the Meeting of the Parties, their expected annual or multi-annual financial and in-kind contributions. Signatories, other interested States and organizations may wish to indicate their expected contributions as well;

2. *Requests* Parties, to contribute each year or to make multi-annual contributions towards the costs of activities under the work programme, in accordance with the scheme referred to in paragraph 1;

3. *Invites* signatories, other interested States and public entities, as well as the private sector, in accordance with the 2009 Revised Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector,⁴ to contribute, in cash or in kind, towards covering the costs of the work programme;

4. *Calls upon* countries with economies in transition to finance to the extent possible their own participation in the activities;

5. *Calls upon* international organizations working in countries with economies in transition to support participation of representatives of these countries and non-governmental organizations in the meetings and other activities under the Protocol;

6. *Encourages* Parties that have historically contributed generously to maintain their previous levels of contribution;

7. *Also encourages* Parties that have so far not contributed, or have contributed modestly, to increase their contributions during the current and future budget cycles so as to ensure the equitable distribution of the financial responsibility for implementation of the work programme, and requests the Bureau to liaise with such Parties where appropriate concerning the achievement of this goal;

8. *Requests* the secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, to allocate in the Convention trust fund by 1 October of each year the sum required for the extension of the contracts of extrabudgetary staff of the secretariat for the upcoming year, as a priority, and also the costs needed for implementation of activities in the first quarter of the upcoming year;

9. *Also requests* the secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, to monitor the expenditure of the funds and to prepare annual reports for review by the Working Group of the Parties in order to ensure that the level of

⁴ Issued by the Secretary General in November 2009. Available from <http://business.un.org/en/documents/6602>.

contributions matches the level of funding needed for the implementation of the work programme;

10. *Requests* the Working Group of the Parties to consider, in the light of these annual reports, whether changes would be required to the content or time frame of the work programme, in the event that the level of actual and/or pledged contributions does not match the level of funding needed;

11. *Further requests* the secretariat to prepare a comprehensive financial report for each session of the Meeting of the Parties, including information on how much Parties and other participating States and organizations have contributed to the budget of the Protocol in cash and in kind, and on how the contributions were spent;

12. *Mandates* the Bureau and the Working Group of the Parties to explore in the next intersessional period options for more predictable, stable and equitably shared funding, and requests them to make the appropriate proposals for the consideration of the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session;

13. *Requests* the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to allocate more resources to support the work under the Convention and its Protocol, in view of the positive evaluation of the Environmental subprogramme during the review of the 2005 reform of the Commission,⁵ considering, inter alia, the balance in the use of regular budgetary resources in the different subprogrammes;

14. *Agrees* to review the operation of the scheme of financial arrangements at the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

⁵ See the Commission's Biennial Report (1 April 2011–11 April 2013) (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 20013, Supplement No. 17* (E/2013/37–E/ECE/1464), annex III, chapter II.A), available from [http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31965#/.](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31965#/)