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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

##### Second meeting

Geneva, 20 and 21 November 2012

Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda

**Promotion and capacity-building: subregional workshops**

### **Report on the subregional workshop “Get Your Right to a Healthy Community” held in Minsk, on 3 and 4 November 2011**

#### *Summary*

At its first meeting (Geneva, 28–29 November 2011), the Working Group of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) took note of the brief by the secretariat on the subregional workshop held in Minsk on 3 and 4 November 2011, and requested it to prepare a report on the workshop for its next meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2011/2, para. 18 (b)).

The objective of the Minsk workshop was to promote the implementation and ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and specifically to provide practical and theoretical assistance regarding the setting up of national pollutant release and transfer registers. The present report summarizes the proceedings of the workshop, identifies the key challenges, needs and solutions, and outlines the major conclusions.

## Contents

|  | <i>Paragraphs</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Introduction.....  | 1–11              | 3           |
| A. Attendance.....   | 2–6               | 3           |
| B. Proceedings.....  | 7–11              | 3           |
| I. Session one: development of national pollutant release and transfer registers — requirements and benefits.....  | 12–15             | 4           |
| II. Session two: setting up an appropriate institutional structure.....  | 16–19             | 5           |
| III. Session three: the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice..... | 20–24             | 6           |
| IV. Session four: the scope of the Protocol — activities, substances and types of releases covered and off-site transfers.....                             | 25–28             | 8           |
| V. Session five: data management.....  | 29–33             | 8           |
| VI. Session six: access to data and its dissemination.....   | 34–37             | 10          |
| VII. Session seven: building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation.....   | 38–42             | 12          |
| VIII. Major conclusions.....   | 43                | 14          |
| IX. Closing statements.....  | 44                | 14          |

## Introduction

1. The secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) 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 cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Belarus, organized a subregional workshop to promote the implementation and ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The workshop was held on 3 and 4 November 2011 in Minsk.

### A. Attendance

2. The workshop was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Protocol: Belgium, Czech Republic, European Union (EU) and Norway.

3. The workshop was attended by delegations from the following Signatories to the Protocol: Armenia, Georgia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

4. Delegations from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan were also present.

5. Also attending were representatives of the following international organizations: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (via Skype). Also present was the European Environment Agency and the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic). The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented: Scientific and Educational Centre for National Development (Armenia); ECOSCOPE (Azerbaijan); Gomel Kids and Youth Association (Belarus); Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (Georgia); Greenwomen Analytical Environmental Agency (Kazakhstan); Independent Environmental Expertise (Kyrgyzstan); "Volgograd-Ecopress" Information Centre (Russian Federation); Bureau of Environmental Investigations (Ukraine); European ECO Forum. Many of the NGOs coordinated their input within the framework of the European ECO Forum.

6. In addition, representatives of the Aarhus Centre of Belarus, the Belarusian State University and the International Sakharov Environmental University of Belarus were represented at the workshop. Mr Victor Yurochko, an independent expert, also participated.

### B. Proceedings

7. The workshop was organized in the following seven thematic sessions: (1) Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers — requirements and benefits; (2) setting up an appropriate institutional structure; (3) the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice; (4) the scope of the Protocol — activities, substances and types of releases covered and off-site transfers; (5) data management; (6) access to data and its dissemination; (7) building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation.

8. Prior to the workshop a questionnaire was sent to participating countries to ascertain the status of pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) developments in the respective countries. At the workshop, participants formed working groups which further identified problems, needs and solutions in relation to PRTR developments. Each session included

expert presentations and a period of discussion in which participants provided interventions and posed questions to the expert panel.

9. Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium), Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, opened the workshop. Mr. Alexander Rachevsky, Head of the Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus, and Mr. Valery Kliuchanovich, Director of the Belarusian Research Centre “Ecology”, delivered welcoming addresses.

10. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties and PRTR experts from Belarus, the Czech Republic, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Ukraine, and from the European Chemical Industry Council, provided advanced PRTR presentations during the workshops’ seven sessions.

11. The main outputs of the workshop included background materials and presentations,<sup>1</sup> and the present report. It is expected that the outcomes of the workshop will provide a basis for identifying priority needs for future work and capacity-building activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. International organizations embarking on PRTR developments in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia are strongly encouraged to review and utilize the outcomes from the Minsk workshop, along with the results of the Technical Assistance Mechanism questionnaire, the status of PRTR activities in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia questionnaire and the pollutant monitoring, diffuse releases and bilateral cooperation questionnaire<sup>2</sup> to inform their PRTR initiatives.

## **I. Session one: development of national pollutant release and transfer registers — requirements and benefits**

12. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs provided an introductory presentation for the first session, on development of national pollutant release and transfer registers — requirements and benefits. A representative of the Belarusian Research Centre “Ecology” provided a presentation describing PRTR developments in Belarus and a joint project between Tajikistan and Belarus. A representative of the Institute of Water Issues, Hydro-Energy and Ecology of the Academy of Sciences, Tajikistan, provided a presentation describing PRTR developments in Tajikistan and the creation of a video on persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

13. The following issues were addressed during the discussion:

(a) Tajikistan said that it intended to include all Protocol on PRTRs substances in the PRTR database which it planned to develop. It was cooperating with a working group on POPs under the the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, i.e., the monitoring of pesticides and the conducting of a monitoring exercise in the context of a national plan on POPs. The outcomes of that monitoring would need to be expanded further for use in a planned PRTR database, but relevant data already existed in electronic format;

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<sup>1</sup> These documents and other information and documentation for the workshop, including presentations, are available online from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/protocol-on-prtrs/areas-of-work/envppprtrcb/events.html>

<sup>2</sup> This document can be accessed through the following web page at <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/protocol-on-prtrs/areas-of-work/envppprtrcb/surveys.html>

(b) The need for each country to identify pollutants and the production facilities that were releasing those pollutants;

(c) The importation of chemical weapons substances and the transport of such substances through countries;

(d) The challenge of matching annex I activities to annex II pollutants of the Protocol. It was stated that that was a learning process and that it was important for each country to make a start on that important task, to cooperate together and to get industry involved in the process, working together and gradually building up systems covering more substances. It was mentioned that some Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects focused on some substances that were on the PRTR pollutants list and the associated activities;

(e) It was confirmed that threshold values applied to a single industrial facility overall and that there could be several sources in a single facility.

14. The following key problems and needs were identified in relation to PRTR requirements and benefits:

(a) Financing and fund-raising for financial resources;

(b) A lack of technical experts.

15. The following key solutions were identified in relation to PRTR requirements and benefits:

(a) Fund-raising;

(b) Training of experts, experience exchange, consultations and workshops.

## **II. Session two: setting up an appropriate institutional structure**

16. For session two, a presentation was provided by a representative of the Climate and Pollution Agency, Norway, describing the institutional structure for the PRTR in Norway.

17. The following issues were addressed in the ensuing discussion:

(a) The Norwegian Climate Pollution Agency representative said that its PRTR database contained all sectors of polluting activity. Furthermore, the Norwegian PRTR website provided data for each single industrial facility, with a timeline of releases for each site. Norway had given responsibility for providing such data to the facility, and there was a need to explain to facilities that they were responsible for their own actions. Countries were moving towards electronic reporting and so it was important to have one authority to compile, check and publish data. Validation could be conducted by experts inspecting facilities on the ground. In the following discussion, the Norwegian representative described how PRTR was a good way to ensure that citizens had access to validated information on industrial releases and how that could ease the relationship between industry and local peoples;

(b) The Norwegian representative noted that each EU country had its own software, and that the European Environment Agency provided freely available computer software for PRTR databases. Each country was also free to develop its own software system;

(c) A question was raised as to who approved the questionnaire form for report inputs to online PRTR databases. It was stated that each report form was created as a best fit for the purpose of each country;

(d) In response to a question on whether there were planned regular data verifications in Norway or only when there was a suspicion of incorrect data, and how support for the PRTR was funded in Norway, the Norwegian representative observed that that measurement systems, frequency of samples and the monitoring programme were relevant to verification procedures and ensuring “good” data. Money was allocated from the Norwegian Government ministry and it used the “polluter pays” principle to raise tax revenue.

18. The following key problems and needs were identified in relation to setting up an appropriate institutional structure:

- (a) A lack of trained staff;
- (b) A lack of institutions providing necessary information;
- (c) A lack of cooperation with other institutions to collect data;
- (d) A need for modernization.

19. The following key solutions were identified in relation to setting up an appropriate institutional structure:

- (a) Increased sharing of information and cooperation between institutions;
- (b) Staff training;
- (c) A single agency to host the PRTR database with responsibility for performing data validation and publishing the data.

### **III. Session three: the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice**

20. For session three, presentations were provided by a representative of the Bureau of Environmental Investigation, Ukraine, and by a representative of the State University of Belarus, outlining the ongoing work towards accession by Belarus, including a proposal to the State authority and required State approval.

21. The following issues were addressed in the discussion:

(a) A question was raised on how the business community could be convinced of the need to move towards a PRTR system, and what best practices were for the that community. It was stated that a PRTR provided a validated way for industry to inform the public that industry was improving environmental performance and that that could improve the image of companies;

(b) A speaker observed that the environmental reporting form in the Russian Federation listed different types of waste, but not different types of pollutant substances and that the statistical reporting forms for substances that were used by the Russian Ministry of Nature Protection often contained restrictions.

22. The following key problems were identified in relation to the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice:

- (a) Gaps in legislation on PRTRs;
- (b) Georgia had no waste law (only a draft law);

- (c) Legal restrictions on the dissemination of statistical data on the impact of certain facilities on the environment (except in Ukraine);
- (d) A lack of methodologies and norms for the calculation of the total value of pollutant releases;
- (e) Part of the statistical information was closed (confidential);
- (f) Legal issues in some countries in relation to data confidentiality, data dissemination or data acquisition;
- (g) In Belarus data collection was executed by the Belarusian Research Centre "Ecology";
- (h) Facilities did not provide information of the composition of waste by substance (Russian Federation, Kazakhstan);
- (i) The issue of how to deal with importation of restricted pesticides;
- (j) The return to the use of the 2-TP-waste forms (Russian Federation).

23. The following key needs were identified in relation to the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice:

- (a) An upgrade of legislation;
- (b) Development of calculation methods;
- (c) Ecological information should be presented in the statistical reporting forms (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation);
- (d) Consultations between the stakeholders;
- (e) Adaptation of existing reporting systems to the Protocol requirements.

24. The following key solutions were identified in relation to the regulatory framework for data collection and dissemination and for public participation and access to information and justice:

- (a) Providing criteria for information on facilities to be disseminated in the legal acts;
- (b) Defining (e.g., through legislation) the mechanism for information flow from facilities to a PRTR website where it would be open to the public;
- (c) Merging of environmental regulations in a country into one pollution control act (as was the case in Norway) under which all industrial activity in that country that released a certain amount of pollution was illegal unless a permit had been allocated. Each permit should include measuring and reporting requirements and each facility should enter reports directly online to the PRTR database;
- (d) Delegating the function of PRTR operator to the existing governmental structure or creating an agency for the purpose;
- (e) Defining the usage of existing statistical and reporting forms of the facilities for PRTR matters, and changing the procedure for use of ministry of the environment information;
- (f) Developing a PRTR module within the general electronic reporting system of the facilities (Kazakhstan);
- (g) Changing the reporting forms;

(h) Developing projects for the adaptation of legislation to the Protocol on PRTRs in every country and providing suggestions as to how to define the functions of different stakeholders (including unification of notions, terms and definitions);

(i) Finding or developing a legal model for PRTR systems to address legal barriers, such as in relation to confidentiality, data acquisition and data dissemination;

(j) Including a question on the reporting forms asking for the agreement of the facility operator to disseminate information (Russian Federation, Kazakhstan). The Republic of Moldova had already solved that problem.

#### **IV. Session four: the scope of the Protocol — activities, substances and types of releases covered and off-site transfers**

25. A presentation for session four was provided by a representative of the Czech Republic, a member of the PRTR Bureau.

26. The following comments were made and questions were addressed during the discussion:

(a) In response to a query on what the Czech Republic did with the PRTR data and what steps had been taken to use the data, it was noted that the data had enabled the identification of more pollutants and a broader definition of operators;

(b) Regarding what steps had been taken at the European level and at the regional level in relation to PRTRs, the Czech representative observed that, since 2003, EU countries had started the ratification process; that member States negotiated regulations that implemented the Protocol in the EU; that three sets of data had been compiled in the EU enabling the identification of trends and comparison of data sets; and that each country could take appropriate action based on those data;

(c) An intervention was made suggesting that data on mobility, populations and biodiversity were also relevant indicators for the state of the environment and that such data should also be included in the PRTR register. PRTR data was validated and was used by many groups of people to inform their reports on biodiversity and other subject matters. One of the next steps was to link PRTR data with reports on human health; a modelling exercise using such data could determine how pollutant releases affected human health and biodiversity.

(d) In response to a question on what were best practices for informing the public on PRTRs, a description was given of various methods, such as using educational programmes to introduce PRTRs.

27. The following key problems and needs were identified in relation to the scope of the Protocol:

(a) The Protocol did not require quantitative data on resource use and that was a potential gap in the scope of the Protocol;

(b) The importation of restricted pesticides needed to be addressed.

28. No specific solutions were suggested in relation to the scope of the Protocol.

#### **V. Session five: data management**

29. In session five, a presentation was provided by a representative of the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland, describing aspects of the PRTR in

Poland, such as data verification, data publication, data flow, a tool for working on the data and data presentation. A presentation was also provided by representatives of the Belarusian Research Centre “Ecology”, describing processes of environmental monitoring in Belarus, data sets that could be used for a PRTR and other issues, such as lack of data verification and funding.

30. The following issues were addressed during the discussion:

(a) In response to a question as to what substances were covered in the PRTR in Poland, the Polish representative said that all the PRTR Protocol substances were covered in Poland’s PRTR;

(b) Regarding whether results of the monitoring of radioactive contamination in the soil and water in Belarus were available, a representative of Belarus responded that the results were available online and that the primary data was collected by the Centre for Environmental Control and Radioactive Monitoring. It was noted, however, that radioactive nuclides were not currently included in the Protocol on PRTRs pollutants list;

(c) Responding to a query on how far Poland and Belarus had institutionalized the process of data collection with industrial sectors, Poland said that there had been a lack of support from industry in Poland to improve the data. Belarus stated that a “business and ecology” club had been formed in Belarus to discuss ecological responsibility and that industry could benefit from the PRTR via cost savings and improved relationships with citizens;

(d) With regard to what data on dioxins existed in Belarus and Poland and how it was acquired, Poland informed participants that about 20 facilities were reporting those data in Poland. Belarus had a national plan to 2028, including the creation of a database on POPs, such as polychlorinated biphenyls, furans and dioxins;

(e) Poland noted that around 1,300 companies were reporting in its national PRTR system. Companies could not choose the report format, and both print and electronic versions were mandatory;

(f) Regarding the usage of paper-based or electronic reporting systems for the countries of the former Soviet Union, the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties said that countries had to live with both systems and transition to a fully electronic system gradually. When the jump to an electronic system took place a helpdesk could be required for a number of months to answer phone calls from facilities on how to use the electronic reporting system;

(g) Questions were raised in relation to situations where the “zone of placement” was not specified by legislation, how companies were selected accurately for the monitoring of water discharges, and who would fund the proposed database of dioxins in Belarus. In response, the representative of Belarus noted that in Belarus zones of placement were subject to scientific inspection and parameters were endorsed by the Government department. Water monitoring took place 500 metres upstream and downstream in zones of discharges and run-off water discharges were monitored where there was a clean water resource. The development of a dioxins database would be funded by the State and some work relevant for the proposed database had already taken place under the Stockholm Convention;

(h) Responding on whether engagement with NGOs took place during the development of the PRTR in Poland, the Polish representative affirmed that the PRTR in Poland had been developed taking into account input from local authorities;

(i) An intervention was made describing a law on environmental statistics that had been adopted in Belarus, according to which companies had to provide environmental

reports, only aggregated data could be disseminated and written permission had to be received to provide that data to the public;

(j) It was stated that Belarus had all the tools it needed to start to develop a PRTR, for example, self-monitoring, and that it was on the verge of being able to move into a PRTR system. It was noted that Georgia had recently developed a PRTR website.

31. The following key problems were identified in relation to data management:

- (a) A lack of electronic reporting to directly populate a PRTR database;
- (b) Imperfect methods of pollutants release calculation.

32. The following key needs were identified in relation to data management:

- (a) Verification of information due to lack of automated reporting;
- (b) Experts for data verification and measurement taking;
- (c) Improved methods of pollutants release calculation;
- (d) Harmonization of national lists of pollutants to the PRTR list;
- (e) Fund-raising;
- (f) Training and workshops;
- (g) A material and technical basis (including software).

33. The following key solutions were identified in relation to data management:

- (a) Creation of a PRTR body;
- (b) Development of a PRTR website;
- (c) Development of database based on the ecological permissions with a view to simplifying the accession process (Belarus);
- (d) Countries advanced in PRTR to offer access to PRTR software to countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- (e) Demonstration of political will by the authority of the country;
- (f) Improvement of legislation;
- (g) Using the national system of environmental monitoring for PRTR needs.

## **VI. Session six: access to data and its dissemination**

34. For session six, three presentations were given: by a representative of the European Chemical Industry Council describing PRTR & the Responsible Care® Initiative; by a representative of the European Environment Agency describing the European PRTR and public access to information; and by an independent expert from Ukraine describing modern technologies for accumulation and distribution of environmental information.

35. The following key problems were identified in relation to access to data and its dissemination:

- (a) A lack of resources for development and support of PRTR websites;
- (b) Limited access to the Internet;
- (c) No special body for decentralization of PRTR information;
- (d) Stakeholders did not have enough PRTR information;

(e) Existing environmental permits in countries might not require reporting on all the substances listed under the PRTR Protocol;

(f) The main aim of countries' environmental monitoring systems was not always the same as that of the PRTR Protocol, and more integrated reporting systems might be required;

(g) Issues in relation to diffuse sources, such as measurement methodology and implementation. All countries needed guidelines to measure diffuse sources;

(h) The issue of how to account for all releases from small and medium-sized enterprises that were below the thresholds;

(i) New reporting systems could create additional burdens in countries and may face resistance;

(j) The fact that some companies and some countries were not reporting certain substances and the reasons for that;

(k) Illegal imports were hard to quantify and account for;

(l) The accidental release of pollutants that were not covered by permits;

(m) The potential of NGOs was not maximized.

36. The following key needs were identified in relation to access to data and its dissemination:

(a) Computer software and support to create PRTR databases (for example, in Belarus);

(b) Software for data publication in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the possibility of using the E-PRTR software platform;

(c) Improve usage of information technologies and access to the Internet;

(d) Technical capability to input and upload data;

(e) Measuring equipment (required, for example in Tajikistan);

(f) Qualified specialists;

(g) A unified programme;

(h) Training for journalists, staff, NGOs and business;

(i) Workshops;

(j) Development of methods;

(k) Legal regulations to ensure the dissemination of information and access to it;

(l) Provision of a central repository for national PRTR links (via PRTR.net portal);

(m) Improvement of the substance list per activity list.

37. The following key solutions were identified in relation to access to data and its dissemination:

(a) Creation of an integrated reporting form for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

(b) Simplification of the PRTR reporting form for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

- (c) Building upon existing functional structures, for example, by amending existing forms in order to adapt to the requirements of new legal instruments;
- (d) Creation of mechanisms to collect and share information;
- (e) Use of alternatives, such as printed media;
- (f) Provision of inexpensive Internet access;
- (g) Involvement of mass media and NGOs;
- (h) Provision of training and distance-learning courses;
- (i) Encouraging experience exchange;
- (j) Countries advanced in PRTR to offer access to PRTR software to countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- (k) Providing recommendations for access to data and dissemination;
- (l) Harmonization of legislation (introduction of special articles, etc.);
- (m) Adaptation of information for end-users (user-friendly information) (could involve NGOs);
- (n) Consideration given to including small and medium-size enterprises as diffuse sources and estimating the releases at a national level in order to account for releases from such sources that were below the thresholds.

## **VII. Session seven: building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation**

38. Session seven opened with a presentation via Skype by a representative of UNITAR describing the following online tools for PRTR capacity-building: PRTR.net, a global website created to assist countries in the development, implementation and improvement of PRTR programmes; and PRTR Learn, an online tool for PRTR training and knowledge sharing. A presentation was also provided by a representative of the NGO, “Volgograd-Ecopress” Information Centre, describing the experience of PRTR development in the regions of the Russian Federation and the development of a PRTR website for the Volga region.<sup>3</sup>

39. The following comments were made and issues were raised during the discussion:

- (a) Delegates welcomed the potential of the online tools for PRTR capacity-building;
- (b) In response to a question on possible plans to extend the PRTR development website for the Volga region to other parts of the Russian Federation, a representative of “Volgograd-Ecopress” said that it unfortunately lacked the resources to do so, but that a seminar had been held for neighbouring regions.

40. The following key problems were identified in relation to building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation:

- (a) A lack of exchange of international best practices;
- (b) A low level of NGO utilization.

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the Volga PRTR is available (in Russian) from <http://www.prtr-volga.com/>

41. The following key needs were identified in relation to building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation:

- (a) Information technology tools;
- (b) Verification of data;
- (c) Shared environmental systems;
- (d) A decision as to what the focus would be in the European Neighbourhood Partnership project;
- (e) A methodology for making PRTR tools available free for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- (f) Better cooperation and mechanisms to enable countries advanced in PRTRs to help countries seeking to develop PRTRs;
- (g) Provision of greater access to the Internet in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

42. The following key solutions were identified in relation to building capacity, public awareness and international cooperation:

- (a) Dissemination of information via campaigns, mass media, etc.;
- (b) Introduction of the notion of “environmental information” and provision of free access to it in countries where it was not already freely available;
- (c) Belarus could act as a focal point for pilot PRTR projects that combine the use of green technology in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and could host a future subregional PRTR workshop to take place when PRTR developments were more advanced;
- (d) Belarus could seek inclusion in European Chemical Industry Council activities, thereby giving companies an opportunity to go to western markets;
- (e) Improvement of industry ranking in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia so that they could access the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) programme;
- (f) Countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to describe in their own words what their needs were, rather than answering a predefined set of questions in the Technical Assistance Mechanism Questionnaire;
- (g) Greater use of electronic tools for interactive PRTR learning, video conferencing and online PRTR workshops, thereby reducing costs for activities;
- (h) Increased capacity-building and stakeholder engagement via use of the PRTR as an indicator for measuring the success of a green economy in the respective countries and as a basis for developing green technologies and eco-innovation, for example, to address pollution hotspots;
- (i) Training for journalists and engagement of NGOs and business on the subject of PRTRs and how PRTRs assist the development a green economy.

## **VIII. Major conclusions**

43. Major conclusions from the workshop are as follows:

(a) Good representation and active participation was achieved: 10 out of 12 countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia were represented;

(b) Key problems, needs and solutions were identified and comprehensively detailed by workshop participants. These outcomes provide a basis for identifying priority needs for future PRTR development work, capacity-building activities and bilateral programmes. The outcomes can be utilized by countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and by international organizations, such as ECE, UNITAR, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and GEF, in order to inform ongoing and planned activities.

## **IX. Closing statements**

44. In a closing statement, a representative of the Belarusian Research Centre “Ecology” thanked the workshop stakeholders, summarized the capacity-building benefits of the subregional workshop, described the links between developing a PRTR and a green economy and recommended that a pilot PRTR project take place in Belarus.

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