

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers
Working Group of the Parties

Seventh meeting

Geneva, 28-29 November 2019

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹
as adopted by the Working Group at its seventh meeting

Item 1. Adoption of agenda

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the Chair;
- ii) adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/1.

Item 2. Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations;
- ii) encouraged Signatories and other interested States to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

Item 3. Designation of National Focal Points

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations on the status of nominations of National Focal Points;
- ii) called upon those Parties, which have not nominated a focal point to date, namely, Netherlands, Republic of Moldova and United Kingdom, to proceed with the nomination without any delay.

Item 4. Promotion and capacity-building

(a) Coordination mechanisms and synergies

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and thanked them and other partner organisations for support provided to furthering implementation of PRTRs systems thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol on PRTRs;
- ii) took note of the report by the Chair of the International PRTR Coordinating Group and invited interested Parties and stakeholders to provide comments on a draft note developed by the Group on major PRTR-related web portals;

¹ This document was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the document will be incorporated in the report of the meeting.

iii) called upon relevant partner organisations and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to cooperate closely where possible to create synergies to further the implementation of the projects related to PRTRs;

iv) reiterated its call upon governments to strengthen cooperation between experts dealing with the PRTR Protocol and those dealing with the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), UNEP/ Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and UNEP Conventions on Chemicals (BRS Conventions and the Minamata Convention on Mercury), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant agreements and programmes, as well as involved in projects carried out by international organisations as to ensure coordination at national level;

v) called on Parties, other interested countries and organizations to promote PRTRs as a reporting tool for MEAs dealing with chemicals and pollution, and other relevant MEAs;

vi) encouraged national focal points to the Protocol to liaise with national focal points to the Aarhus Convention in their respective countries as to contribute to the comments on the Recommendations on electronic information tools being updated under the Aarhus Convention;

vii) called on Parties to both treaties to consider implementation of the Protocol and related provisions of the Aarhus Convention in synergy;

viii) reiterated its call upon Parties and stakeholders to consider implementation of the Protocol and Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in synergy.

(b) Global promotion of the Protocol

The Working Group:

i) welcomed the joint efforts of UNECE and OECD in organising the third Global Round Table on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and their cooperation with UNEP and UNITAR, and took note of the report of the event (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/3);

ii) called upon Parties, other interested States and organisations to continue global promotion of the Protocol including by making relevant guidance material available in all United Nation languages;

iii) called upon the secretariat and interested States to translate the text of the Protocol in other United Nations official languages;

iv) reiterated that PRTRs support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 9 (industry innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Item 5: Compliance and reporting mechanisms

The Working Group:

i) urged Slovenia and Malta to submit their national implementation reports for the 2017 reporting cycle without any delay;

ii) took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the preparations for the 2021 reporting cycle.

Item 6. Development of the Protocol

The Working Group:

i) took note of the progressive examples that showcase the development of PRTRs by going beyond the minimum requirements of the Protocol presented by the EU, Sweden and Serbia;

ii) expressed its appreciation to presenters for sharing these valuable experiences;

iii) took note of the information provided by participants;

iv) recognised the importance of modernising PRTR systems;

v) recognized the usefulness of such activities in showing ways of how to optimize existing PRTR systems and design new PRTRs that address the Protocol's objective to establish coherent and integrated PRTRs in an efficient manner;

vi) requested the Bureau and the secretariat to explore an opportunity for organising a similar session on developments regarding modernisation of PRTR system at the next meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol in 2020, as feasible.

The Working Group:

Taking into account the Report on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6), including the possible approach for revising Annexes I, II and III (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6/Add.1); and the Comparative analysis of different international reporting obligations related to Annexes I, II and III of the Protocol on PRTRs (PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.2),

Aware that some Parties are interested in information on possible approaches for Parties to develop PRTRs, going beyond the current requirements of the Protocol,

Recalling that pursuant to article 6(2) of the Protocol, having assessed the experience gained from the development of national pollutant release and transfer registers and the implementation of this Protocol, and taking into account relevant international processes, the Meeting of the Parties shall review the reporting requirements under this Protocol and shall consider specified issues in its further development,

Also recalling that pursuant to article 20 of the Protocol, Parties may propose amendments to the Protocol and that such proposals are to be considered by the Meeting of the Parties,

- i) Decided to intensify analytical work on the development of the Protocol, including the review referred to in article 6(2) of the Protocol and issues referred to in focal area III of the Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1), and to set up an information exchange among Parties and interested stakeholders to further share experience gained in the Protocol implementation, including implementation challenges and possible approaches for Parties to develop PRTRs going beyond the current requirements of the Protocol. This information exchange, to be organised by the Bureau with the assistance of the secretariat, through contributions should cover:
 - experience gained in the implementation of the activities specified in annex I of the Protocol and their possible revision;
 - experience gained in the implementation of the pollutants specified in annex II of the Protocol and their possible revision;

- experience gained in the implementation of the thresholds in annexes I and II; and their possible revision; and
- a possible inclusion of other relevant aspects, such as information on on-site transfers, storage, the specification of reporting requirements for diffuse sources or the development of criteria for including pollutants under this Protocol.

This analytical work will include compilation of experiences provided by Parties and interested stakeholders.

The information exchange could also cover experience gained in areas identified in paragraph 39 of the report on the development of the Protocol on PRTRs (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6).

- ii) In the light of the information shared, and based on inputs by Parties and interested stakeholders, will draw up a comprehensive report with the assistance of the Bureau;
- iii) Request the Bureau to submit this report for consideration of the Working Group at its eighth meeting, so that the Working Group recommends to the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session the adoption of the report as a reference document for Parties.

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the comments provided by the participants on the Report on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6 and Add.1) and requested interested participants to submit possible comments in writing to the secretariat by 15 December 2019 as to consider them for the future work on the matter;
- ii) took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the following required editorial revision in the Report on the development of the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6): Reference symbol for the document *Comparative analysis of different international reporting obligations related to annexes I, II and III* should be: PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.2 and not PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.1

Item 7. Subregional and national activities: needs and challenges for capacity building

The Working Group:

- i) expressed its appreciation to representatives of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, North Macedonia and Republic of Moldova for sharing valuable experiences;
- ii) expressed its appreciation to representatives of EEA, UNITAR and OECD for the organisations' important work in providing opportunities for capacity building;
- iii) took note of the information provided by the presenters;
- iv) welcomed efforts by countries and organizations to promote the establishment of PRTR systems and steps taken towards implementation of and accession to the Protocol, and invited interested Parties and stakeholders to inform the secretariat of further required assistance in developing PRTRs;
- v) called upon Parties and other interested member States to provide support to countries requiring assistance for developing their PRTRs and acceding to the Protocol either through bilateral assistance or contributions to relevant organisations dealing with capacity building;
- vi) requested the Bureau and the secretariat to explore an opportunity for organising a similar session on capacity building at the next meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol in 2020, as feasible.

Item 8. Implementation of the work programmes for 2018–2021, including financial matters

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the Report on implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/4);
- ii) took note of the Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/5) as well as information provided by the secretariat on recent contributions received;
- iii) took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the financial resource situation of the secretariat and on recent contributions and pledges;
- iv) expressed its concern with regard to low number of pledges;
- v) expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding;
- vi) reiterated its call on Parties to strive not to earmark large contributions for specific purpose as to facilitate the management of funds for implementation of the work programme in a balanced way.

Item 9. Preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol**(a) Hosting and preparatory timeline**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the secretariat regarding the related outcomes of the 23rd meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 26–28 June 2019);
- ii) took note of possible dates for the fourth session to be held towards mid-October 2021;
- iii) welcomed the preliminary interest expressed by the Government of Georgia to host the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, and requested the secretariat to further liaise with the Government of Georgia on that matter;
- iv) mandated the Bureau to take the decision on the hosting and timing prior to the next meeting of the Working Group, as appropriate, and to report to the Working Group on the topic at its next meeting;
- v) took note of the preparatory timeline for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.5).

(b) Substantive preparations

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the Note on the work programme for 2022–2025 for the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/7) and requested the Bureau with the support from the secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the work programme for 2022–2025 for the Protocol for the next meeting of the Working Group, in line with the approach and indicative timeline outline in the document;
- ii) took note of the Note on future financial arrangements under the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/8) and requested the Bureau with the support from the secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the future financial arrangements under the Protocol for the next meeting

of the Working Group. The draft decision should include both voluntary and mandatory schemes of contributions and the United Nations scale of assessment, as in the current Note;

iii) took note of the information provided by the Chair regarding future draft agenda for MOP-4 and possible draft elements for the future declaration, and requested the Bureau to prepare a draft agenda and draft elements for the declaration in cooperation with the Convention's Bureau, for its next meeting. Drafts will be distributed to national focal points and stakeholders for comments prior to their finalisation for the next meeting of the Working Group.

Item 10. Calendar of meetings

The Working Group took note of the tentative schedule of relevant meetings planned for 2020.

Item 11. Other business

No issues were discussed.

Item 12. Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting (as contained in this document PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.7) and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.
