

**REPORT ON THE THIRD MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE MEETING OF
THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL ON POLLUTANT RELEASE AND
TRANSFER REGISTERS**

Brussels, 8 June 2012

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium, Chair), Mr. Lars Petter Bingh (Norway, Vice-Chair), Mr. Nicholas Obe (United Kingdom, Vice-Chair), Mr. Jan Maršák (Czech Republic), Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden), Mr. Iñigo de Vicente-Mingarro (Spain) and Ms. Irene Olivares (Spain, for Ms. Carmen Canales), Ms Manuela Musella (European Union) and Mr. Keir McAndrew (European Union) (for Ms. Marianne Wenning, pending nomination of a new Bureau member).

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

II. Adoption of agenda

The Chair of the Bureau outlined the agenda for the meeting. The Bureau adopted the agenda.

III. Status of ratification of the Protocol

The secretariat informed that as of 8 June 2012 there were 28 Parties and that information on the status of ratifications is available from <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ratification.html>

IV. Designation of national focal points

The secretariat reported on the designation of national focal points (NFPs). The Bureau requested the secretariat to send a reminder to countries without an official NFP nomination regarding designation of NFPs also providing an explanation on the role of the NFPs. The updated list of NFPs is to be distributed before the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to take place on 20-21 November 2012.

V. Promotion and capacity building

(a) Coordination mechanisms: International PRTR Coordinating Group and Capacity Building Coordination under the Aarhus Convention

The Bureau was briefed on the preparations for the upcoming meetings under the coordination mechanisms, including the Seventh capacity-building coordination meeting under the Aarhus Convention to be held in Geneva on 15 June 2012 and the Seventh International PRTR Coordinating Group to be held in Paris on 12 September 2012 (afternoon), back to back with the Task Force on PRTRs under the auspices of OECD (10-12 September 2012).

The Bureau discussed possible synergies between activities under the ECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including potential areas for cooperation with the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water) and Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). The Bureau noted that Norway attempts to make use of data reported under CLRTAP for its PRTR system, and that Sweden uses PRTR and CLRTAP data to validate reporting gaps in pollution inventories. The

Bureau also addressed possible synergies between the PRTR Protocol and the Gothenburg Protocol. The Bureau noted the EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook¹ which is also available in Russian. The Guidebook provides guidance on estimating emissions from both anthropogenic and natural emission sources. It is designed to facilitate reporting of emission inventories by countries to the CLRTAP and the EU National Emission Ceilings Directive.

A possible cooperation between CLRTAP and PRTR Protocol could include an exchange of estimation techniques on emissions/releases, especially for diffuse sources. The Guidebook could serve as a source for information.

For what concerns the Water Convention, the Bureau pointed out that PRTRs systems would facilitate preparation of assessments of transboundary waters carried out under the Water Convention. The Bureau also noted that future work on Shared Environmental Information Systems (SEIS) has a potential for synergy with the work under the Protocol on PRTRs.

(b) Global promotion of the Protocol

(i) Side events on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development to take place at the Rio+20 Conference

The secretariat informed about the following side-events to be organised at the Rio+20 Conference:

- A full day side event organized by World Resource Institute in cooperation with ECE and other partners on 19th June 2012.
- A joint ECE and other UN regional commissions side event in the Rio+20 Conference premises where ECE will focus its contribution on Principle 10, through for example, the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol on 21 June 2012.
- ‘Sharing environment information in action’, EEA side event, 19 June 2012.
- UNEP side event "Access for All", June 21 2012.

The Bureau noted that the secretariat has prepared a promotional leaflet on the Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol for the Rio+20 Conference.

(ii) Joint global round table on PRTRs under the auspices of OECD and UNECE

The Bureau discussed and agreed on a proposal on a joint round table on PRTRs under the auspices of OECD and UNECE. The joint round table will hold back-to-back meetings of the Working Group of the Parties to the PRTR Protocol, the OECD PRTR Task Force, the PRTR International Coordinating Group and the PRTR Bureau in November 2013.

(iii) Promotion of the Protocol in Latin America

The Bureau discussed the promotion of the Protocol in Latin America. Spain provided a report on the status of PRTR developments in countries involved in UNITAR’s project on POPs monitoring, reporting and information dissemination using PRTRs.

In order to further explore cooperation in Latin America, the Bureau agreed to invite the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (Comisión Centroamericana de

¹ <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications-ru/emep-eea>

Ambiente y Desarrollo, CCAD) to attend the second meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties, which takes place on the 20-21 November 2012.

The Bureau discussed the possibility of a promotion mission to two countries in Latin America that would complement existing PRTR developments in Latin America. The two countries could then act as catalysts for Protocol promotion in Latin America.

The Bureau discussed the possibility of inviting representatives of countries of Latin America to attend the second meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties and noted that official nominations would need to be received from government institutions in those countries.

The Bureau also discussed promotion of the Protocol in other countries that have already implemented PRTRs or pollution inventories, for example, USA, Canada, Japan, and Australia. The Bureau also noted that the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation expressed its possible interest to be involved via video-conferencing at the second meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties.

(c) Subregional workshop for South East Europe

The secretariat informed the Bureau that it is holding consultations with partner organisations regarding a subregional workshop for South East Europe, scheduled for Spring 2013.

(d) PRTR cost model

The secretariat informed the Bureau that an email was distributed to NFPs on 24th January 2012 by the secretariat informing where the cost model documents and files are available online, and describing the two formats of the cost model that are available. Translation of the cost model documents into Russian language has been arranged with Belarus, which will be of benefit to Russian speaking experts. The secretariat has conducted an initial assessment of the feasibility, costs and challenges of developing a web based interface for the SQL version of the cost model. The progress in relation to the use of the cost model will be addressed at the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.

(e) Crosswalk project

The Bureau discussed the status of the project on the Crosswalk between the Pollutant and the Waste Specific Reporting on Off-site Transfers², taking into consideration the following two criteria: (a) whether reliable and relevant data is available and (b) whether funds are available, to proceed with the project. The Czech Republic described the feasibility of convergence of the pollutant specific and waste specific reporting approaches and noted that the data sets are incomparable. The Bureau recommended that the project be suspended due to the lack of data and agreed that this information will be reported at the upcoming meeting of the Task Force on PRTRs under the OECD and at the second meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties.

(f) Provision of technical assistance

The Bureau considered reports by the secretariat on PRTR surveys and on modalities of technical assistance. The Bureau agreed to review the related documents before they are submitted to the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.

² OECD detailed work programme on Pollutants Release and transfer Registers for 2011-2012 (ENV/JM(2010)47).

The Bureau discussed a proposal put forward by Belarus at the first meeting of the Working group of the Parties, which aimed at establishing a resource centre to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Belarus, in consultation with those countries is to prepare a concept note in relation to that activity for consideration by the Working Group at its second meeting.

Belarus had informed the secretariat that it plans to submit the document for internal consultations and approval before making it available to the Bureau and the Working Group.

(g) Communication strategy, electronic tools and publications

The secretariat reported on preparation of publications and use of electronic tools. It also informed that it plans a survey on the implementation of the Communication Strategy prior to the second meeting of the Working Group.

(h) Other relevant activities

The Chair informed about the outcomes of the latest meeting of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and of the latest informal meeting of the representatives of governing bodies of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), held on 16 April 2012.

The secretariat informed about the outcomes of the review of the Environmental subprogramme by ECE EXECOM, which took place on 21 May 2012.

European ECO Forum informed the meeting that it had been approached by several non-governmental organizations from China, which expressed their interest in the work on Protocol on PRTRs. The information received was that the Ministry of Environment of China is interested about developing the PRTR system in China and that it is looking for different systems and experiences which could be used to do so.

VI. Compliance committee and reporting mechanism

Following a brief update by the secretariat the Bureau noted that there are no developments in this area. The Bureau also noted that the secretariat will report at the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties with regard to the compliance mechanism and progress in developing an on-line reporting tool and that the secretariat will also prepare a timeline with regard to reporting on implementation of the Protocol.

VII. Implementation of the Protocol's current work programme

The Bureau discussed progress in implementation of the Protocol's current work programme.

The Bureau noted that capacity building at the national level is needed and that this could be facilitated by partner organisations working in countries. The Bureau considered that countries that request capacity building activities should have met relevant criteria in relation to PRTR development and that this matter could be discussed by the Meeting of the Parties in 2014.

VIII. Financial matters

The Bureau considered the report by the secretariat on financial matters.

The Bureau considered that the letters requesting financial support (referred to in the report of the Bureau's 2nd meeting) should be sent out after the Rio+20 Conference, in September-October 2012.

The Bureau considered the information on human and financial resource situation of the secretariat and noted that the secretariat undertakes a heavy workload to ensure both the Aarhus Convention and the PRTR Protocol work programmes are implemented.

The Bureau expressed its concern with regard to the shortage of contributions and low number of pledges and discussed the method of contributions that could be used in the future and whether the current interim scheme of voluntary contributions would suffice. The Bureau agreed that alternative funding options should be put forward at the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties and that Parties should decide on a suitable method of funding moving forward. In relation to this, the Bureau agreed to prepare a document for the Working Group of the Parties outlining possible options for funding.

IX. Second session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Bureau agreed to prepare draft proposal on elements of the work programme for 2014-2017 and draft proposal on the preparation of the strategic plan for 2015-2020 for consideration by the Working Group of the Parties at its second meeting.

The Bureau discussed possible options for the hosting of the second session of the Meeting of the Parties and noted that there is currently no definite news in relation to the hosting.

X. Agenda of the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties

The Bureau discussed and approved the agenda of the second meeting of the Working Group of the Parties after agreeing modification to reflect the above proceedings. The Bureau agreed that those countries that wish to be involved in potential bilateral cooperation will be invited to discuss this in small groups during the meeting.

XI. Calendar of meetings

The Bureau noted that the next Bureau meeting will take place back-to-back with the Working Group of the Parties in November 2012.
