

**Chair's Summary from
the fourth meeting between the representatives of the governing bodies
of the ECE Environmental Conventions and the Committee on Environmental
Policy**

21 October 2013, Geneva

Final version

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Michel Amand, Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutants Release and Transfer Registers who succeeded Mr. Chris Dijkens, Chair of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

The objective of the meeting was to continue the discussion on identifying and applying potential synergies between the agreements; to explore possibilities of joint undertakings and discuss possible further actions. The meeting also continued the discussion on financial arrangements under ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and possible involvement of the MEAs in the next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference.

1. Follow-up on the endorsed paper on possible synergies among MEAs and identification of joint activities.

At their meeting on 27 February 2013, the Chairs endorsed the paper on possible synergies among the MEAs. The representatives of the governing bodies of the MEAs and of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) – the participants – informed each other on relevant activities under each MEA and then discussed and explored further possibilities of joint actions.

Ms. Quintas da Silva, the Chair of the CEP, proposed a two-fold approach to conceptualize the exploring of synergies. One way is to continue focusing on synergies by individual MEAs. Secondly, MEAs should find common over-arching issues/themes that would give the process greater political visibility. Participants initially agreed that the promotion of MEAs to other regions, including opening of some MEAs to non-ECE countries could be a possible theme.

In this context, participants discussed that it would be beneficial to have a 'state of the art' report prepared by the secretariat, which would reflect current status of MEAs in relation to the theme of global accession. The report would also reflect on pros and cons as well as opportunities and potential challenges for MEAs that opening up may entail. The participants encouraged the Chair of the CEP to raise this issue in the CEP session that began the following day.

In electronic consultations after the meeting two additional topics were mentioned: implementation of MEAs in countries with economies in transition; and MEAs role in sustainable development.

Participants agreed to discuss this issue further.

2. Promotion of MEAs to other regions, including opening of some MEAs to non-ECE countries.

Participants exchanged information on recent developments with regard to promotion of MEAs to other regions, including opening of some MEAs to non-ECE countries. They agreed this exchange to be very beneficial especially to learn from other MEAs experience on the process of opening the MEAs (see also notes on agenda item 1).

3. A follow-up on the outcomes of the review of the 2005 ECE reform adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe

Mr. Keiner, Director of the Environment Division, informed the participants on the outcome of the review of the 2005 ECE reform (E/ECE/1468) as adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe, at its sixty-fifth session. Participants discussed these outcomes in conjunction with the response of the ECE Executive Secretary to the joint letter sent to him by the Chairs of MEAs regarding the importance of ECE providing adequate staff resources to service the ECE MEAs.

4. Possible involvement of MEAs in the next “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference

Participants exchanged information on discussions held within the respective MEAs governing bodies on possible involvement of MEAs in the next EfE Ministerial Conference.

In addition, Mr. Lomtadze, Secretary to CEP, informed the participants on results of the survey conducted under the CEP, to which respondents were generally in favour of having a MEA specific segment (11 – strongly agree; 8 – rather agree; 6 – rather disagree, 2 – strongly disagree).

Participants supported the concept of having a MEA segment as part of the next EfE Ministerial Conference without prejudging the content, such as: reinforcement of synergies; promotion of instruments outside the ECE region; MEAs support of addressing implementation gaps and compliance in ECE region and beyond; or contribution of MEAs to post-2015 agenda and follow up to Rio+20.

5. Continuation of the discussion on financial arrangements under MEAs

Participants exchanged information on recent developments with regard to financial arrangements under MEAs, especially in relation to different schemes currently under consideration by MEA governing bodies.

Participants continued discussion on how to ensure adequate and predictable financing of activities under the MEAs and staff required for implementing them. Mr. Dijkens commented on the usefulness of cooperation between focal points responsible for different MEAs within countries and suggested greater interaction between various ministries and departments on the national level.

Participants agreed to share with respective Bureaux the suggestion for greater cooperation between MEAs representatives on the national level. Participants would explore current practices of cooperation on the national level and exchange good practice at the next meeting.

6. Possible joint strategy/roadmap for implementing the outcomes of Rio+20 related to green economy

The secretariat presented ECE activities on green economy, including a green economy toolbox.

Participants exchanged views and presented current activities and plans of the MEAs to follow up the outcomes of Rio+20 related to green economy. They recognized that since MEAs promote good governance most of them could become useful tools to assess progress made in the implementation of green economy. The participants concluded that the process of implementing the outcomes was on-going, so joint activities would have to be further considered.

7. Exchange with the CEP Chair on the organization of the agenda items relevant to MEAs during the CEP session.

Participants discussed open matters related to agenda items relevant to MEAs during the CEP session and agreed on the proceedings for the segment.

8. Other business

The secretariat informed the meeting that the ECE environmental treaties website now contains also an informal networks webpage where documents related to informal meetings are posted:

<http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/enenvironment-conventions/all/informal-networks.html>).

Participants agreed that it would be a good practice to continue to hold their informal meetings back-to-back with CEP sessions. Therefore, a meeting could be tentatively scheduled on 27 October 2014. An additional meeting to take place before that would be considered in due course.

Expected participants



Attachment 1

Informal Meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the 5 MEA's and their protocols

21 October 2013

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