

EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION ON
LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION
Bureau to the Executive Body

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU
TO THE EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION
28 NOVEMBER 2000, GENEVA**

Prepared by the Chairman in collaboration with the secretariat

1. The third meeting of the Bureau in 2000 was chaired by the chairman of the Executive Body, Mr J Thompson (Norway), and was attended by vice chairmen Mr L Lindau (Sweden), Mr S Hart (Canada), Mr R Ballaman (Switzerland), Mr D Hreck (Slovenia), Mr T Johannessen (Norway), Mr M Williams (United Kingdom). Apologies were received from Mr P Szell (United Kingdom). Mr K Bull attended for the UN/ECE secretariat and Mr H. Wuester of the secretariat was invited to attend for agenda items relating to the Implementation Committee.

I. NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF 31 AUGUST 2000

2. The Bureau had previously agreed the note of the previous meeting (EBBureau/2000/2). This had been circulated to Heads of Delegations for information. The Bureau approved the more formal format of the note and agreed to extend the openness of its activities, in keeping with the spirit of the Aarhus Convention, by making future notes available on the Executive Body's Web site. It instructed the secretariat to continue to circulate the note to Heads of Delegations by fax as in the past.

3. Actions from the previous meeting were dealt with under agenda items below.

**II. AGENDA TIMETABLE FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE BODY**

4. The chairman drew attention to proposed changes to the timetable for the eighteenth session of the Executive Body (ECE/EB.AIR/70). The Bureau agreed that the Executive Body should be invited to take item 6, progress in core activities, before item 4, compliance with protocol obligations, to enable Mr Szell to present the report of the Implementation Committee on Tuesday 29 November 2000.

II. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY

5. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the Executive Secretary of the ECE, Ms Danuta Huebner, had been invited by the chairman to address the Executive Body at the beginning of the session.
6. The secretariat provided information on the readiness of documents for the eighteenth session of the Executive Body indicating that there had been problems resulting from additional work-loads being placed on the UN document services in Geneva. This had resulted in many documents only being available just prior to the meeting. The 2000 review of strategies and policies had experienced further difficulties. Some of its documents were long and some were submitted after the deadline. As a consequence some of these were not yet available. The secretariat had taken special steps to try to make documents available to delegates. It had secured agreement to release documents as soon as they became available, and had immediately placed them on the Convention's Web site. It had also asked Mr W Bunch, Chief of Central Planning and Coordination Services, to inform the Executive Body about the difficulties experienced this year.
7. The Bureau expressed its dissatisfaction with the late availability of documents for the Executive Body session, and hoped that this would not occur at future sessions of the Convention's bodies.
8. The Bureau discussed agenda items of the eighteenth session of the Executive Body. In particular it focused upon those items as described below.
9. *Item 3.* The secretariat noted that the preparation of the draft 2000 Review of Strategies and Policies had proved difficult. The increased number of questions, the large volume of responses, shortage of staff in the secretariat and the failure to secure an expert consultant to assist in the preparation of the draft were important factors in the difficulties. In addition, the secretariat had had to argue strongly to maintain the same size draft document as in 1998, and even this was insufficient to adequately summarise all replies effectively. The Bureau considered it was not worth investing a great deal more resources to attempt to produce a document as was published in 1999. It felt that possible actions for the Executive Body might be:
- (a) Request the secretariat to update the report in response to comments received from Parties, primarily for the purposes of implementation and recording responses received;
 - (b) Begin planning for the 2002 review taking into account experiences from 2000 and making effective use of electronic reporting; enabling Parties to update information previously submitted would decrease the efforts required by Parties, although it was recognised that a good baseline data set would be required;
 - (c) As part of a communication strategy, consider ways of making use of the information in the report, e.g. to produce an executive summary for public dissemination.
- Such actions would need to take account of the limited resources that may be available to do significant pieces of work in the coming year.
10. *Item 4.* Implementation Committee. The Bureau noted concerns raised by a member of the Implementation Committee over the replacement of members who did not complete their term of office. The matter may be raised at the eighteenth session of the Executive Body. The Bureau agreed that the issue should be referred back to the Implementation Committee itself so the Executive Body could be properly advised. It was further noted that two members of the

Committee had completed their terms of office and should be replaced. The secretariat had received three nominations, from Denmark, Italy and the Czech Republic. The Bureau scrutinized the *curriculum vitae* of each candidate and considered all three satisfying the necessary criteria including the required mix of professions and reasonable geographic balance for the Committee. It was agreed to consult with their three delegations over the timeliness of an appointment for each candidate. This would enable the Executive Body to be suitably informed for the elections.

11. *Item 5. Financing core activities.* The Bureau discussed the possibilities for decisions by the Executive Body on (i) future action for development of a protocol and (ii) the possible need for immediate action on a decision and recommendation. The latter could be taken under agenda item 10 but might be better dealt with under item 5 depending upon the discussions. It was agreed that this should be left to the discretion of the chairman. For protocol negotiations it was agreed that this should be managed by the Working Group on Strategies and Review, however, it was noted that a meeting of legal experts would be needed in the spring of 2001 to update the necessary text for presentation to the Working Group in September.

12. *Item 12. Elections for the EB Bureau.* The chairman indicated that he was not planning to seek re-election at the coming session. A nomination for a new chairman (Mr H Dovland) had been received from Norway. The Bureau noted that Mr S Hart would also be stepping down at the coming session. Other members of the Bureau indicated their willingness to continue for 2001. One nomination for membership of the Bureau (Mr W Harnett) had been received from the United States. The Bureau recorded its thanks to Mr Hart for his work on the Bureau and for the Convention, and recorded its gratitude to the chairman for his long service to the Executive Body.

III. EUROPEAN COMMISSION LINKS AND LONGER-TERM WORK-PLAN

13. The secretariat reported on the recent meeting of the European Commission's Air Quality Steering Group (AQSG) where the EC's Clean Air for Europe (CAFÉ) had been discussed. The secretariat had been invited to attend the Steering Group meeting to facilitate future collaboration between the Convention and CAFÉ. Other members of the Bureau had also been present. K. Bull had given a presentation on the Convention and its component bodies to the AQSG. The European Commission had submitted a meeting room paper on CAFÉ and future collaboration with the Convention for discussion by the Executive Body at its eighteenth session.

14. The Bureau discussed the need and the potential for future collaboration taking account of the proposals for CAFÉ (that had not yet been finalized), the importance of continued involvement of countries with economies in transition, the differences between the *modus operandi* of the proposed CAFÉ bodies and the bodies of the Convention, and the importance signalling a continued balance of focus for the Convention between Europe and North America.

15. The Bureau agreed:

(a) That a high-level coordinating group should be established with the European Commission that should formalize and control links and collaborative activities; the representation from the Convention should be considered by the new Bureau;

(b) The possibilities for joint meetings and back-to-back meetings should be investigated;

(c) That the Bureau of the Executive Body and those of the component bodies could invite members of the European Commission to specific meetings where items of common interest might be discussed;

(d) To welcome offers to participate in the bodies of CAFÉ, but would request that participation be sufficiently flexible to ensure that appropriate representation was possible at particular meetings;

(e) To welcome as a first step the offer to the EMEP Steering Body of representation on the Technical Analysis Group (TAG) of CAFÉ.

16. The Bureau discussed the need for medium and long term work-plans for the purposes of planning coordination in the future. It recognized that the EMEP Steering Body had agreed a draft long-term work-plan. It was agreed that the Executive Body should signal the usefulness of a long-term work-plans for all groups to ensure that the future needs of the Convention, especially with regard to review and possible revision of protocols, are met. The plans would also help effective collaboration with CAFÉ in areas of mutual interest.

IV. STATUS OF MEETINGS

17. The secretariat had enquired about the status of meetings taking due account that the Executive Body had agreed to use the rules of procedure of the ECE. It was noted that the annual meetings of the ECE were public, but all other ECE meetings were private. The rules specified the former but not the latter, which appeared to be private "by default". The Bureau agreed that current practice in sessions of the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies provided sufficiently openness and transparency at present. However, they further agreed that the item should be kept under review in the future and should be reconsidered if changes took place in other ECE bodies and conventions.

V. FACILITATION OF PARTICIPATION OF COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION

18. The secretariat drew attention to the Executive Body Decision 1997/4 that provided it with guidance for financially supporting countries with economies in transition to attend Working Group and Executive Body sessions. The support was provided through a trust fund, managed by the UN, contributed to on a voluntary basis by Parties to the Convention. Traditionally the fund provided the UN daily subsistence rate for Geneva for those delegates eligible, but did not provide any funds for travel. It was clear from the Decision that support should be given for the first attendance of a Party to an Executive Body session, and also for Parties to attend negotiating sessions. However, absence of negotiations in 2000 resulted in little opportunity to support most countries with economies in transition to attend sessions. The Bureau agreed that it was important to encourage participation and that, where there were no negotiating meetings in a given year, support should be provided for attendance at the Executive Body session. The Bureau further agreed that the level of support currently provided by the secretariat was appropriate.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

19. R Ballaman informed the Bureau of his presentation to the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) at its round table discussions organized to bring together representatives of the ECE environmental conventions. The round table discussions had been considered useful and the secretariat was charged with initiating further action and reporting back to the CEP. The secretariat

informed the Bureau that it was planned to hold a further meeting with representatives from the conventions to consider more carefully particular areas of synergy that may have mutual benefits.

20. The secretariat informed the Bureau that since the official recognition of Yugoslavia by the UN, it was taking advice on Yugoslavia's status regarding the Convention and its Protocols. There was doubt that the newly recognized Yugoslavia was still a Party to the Convention and some Protocols. A ruling by the UN's legal experts in New York was still awaited. The secretariat had been advised that Yugoslavia should have observer status in the forthcoming Executive Body session.

VII. NEXT MEETING

21. The Bureau agreed that it should meet early in the new year to make the necessary plans for collaboration with the EC. The date, time and place should be decided by the Bureau to be elected by the Executive Body at its eighteenth session.