

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
25 APRIL 2002, GENEVA**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman

1. The first meeting of the Bureau in 2002 was chaired by the Chairman of the Executive Body, Mr H Dovland (Norway), and was attended by Vice Chairmen Mr L Lindau (Sweden), Mr W Harnett (United States), Mr R Ballaman (Switzerland), Mr D Hrcek (Slovenia), Mr P Szell (United Kingdom), Mr M Williams (United Kingdom) and Mr H Gregor (Germany). Mr Peter Wicks (European Commission) was invited to attend for agenda items 1 to 3. Mr K Bull and Mr H Wuester (items 1 to 4) attended for the UNECE secretariat.

I. NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2001 (EBBUREAU/2001/2)

2. The Bureau had had the opportunity to comment on and amend the note of the previous meeting (EBBureau/2001/2). The secretariat had subsequently made the note available on the Executive Body's web site. Actions from the previous meeting were dealt with under agenda items below.

II. LONG-TERM TIMETABLE AND COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION
WITH ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CAFÉ PROGRAMME

3. The chairman invited Mr Wicks to summarize work under the CAFE programme related to activities under the Convention. Mr Wicks drew attention to the recent CAFE Steering Group meeting where reports on progress and future plans had been made. He indicated that the European Commission (EC) was aiming to decouple the preparation of a thematic strategy from the legislative proposals. This would enable the former to be prepared before the change of Commissioners at the end of 2004, whilst allowing more time to prepare the detailed legislative requirements. It was hoped that this would provide a reasonable timescale for the scientific and technical work that would be consistent with the work under the Convention. Mr Wicks indicated that the work-plan would be continually updated on the CAFÉ web site.

4. Mr Wicks noted that a CAFE Working Group on Implementation had started its activities whilst Working Groups on Particulate Matter and Target Setting and Policy Assessment had agreed terms of reference from the Steering Group. A WHO project was still awaiting the appointment of a project manager. Discussions in the Technical Analysis Group of CAFÉ had indicated problems associated with local scale modelling. Further consideration needed to be given to this area of

work. In the resulting discussions members of the Bureau stressed the importance of consistency with target setting and the need to set baselines based upon emissions of all European countries.

5. Mr Gregor reported on the Joint Bureaux meeting of the Working Group on Effects and the Steering Body of EMEP held in March 2002. This had successfully developed a coordinated work-plan to ensure that deliverables were available on time. A report of the meeting including a timetable matrix is available on the Convention's web pages. It was noted that some deliverables were still dependent on adequate resources being available. It was agreed that the work-plan should be checked with the CAFE programme proposals and should be kept under review especially with regard to the CAFE work-plan.

6. With regard to activities of the EMEP Steering Body Bureau Mr Williams pointed out that a 5% increase in the overall budget of the centres seemed likely this year. He also indicated that the EMEP Bureau wished to clarify the derestriction of documents that were presented to the Steering Body. It would seem that formal derestriction was unnecessary in many instances due to the changed status of many documents prepared for the Executive Body and its subsidiary bodies. Finally, Mr Williams indicated that he would have to stand down as chairman at the next session of the Steering Body.

7. The Bureau was informed on an initiative for presenting scientific information to delegates at the Working Group on Strategies and Review by making presentations to delegates on the Friday mornings prior to adoption of reports. It was agreed that Canada and the US be invited to make presentations in September. The EC should be invited to speak about CAFÉ in 2003.

8. The Bureau was also informed of a possible proposal by Sweden to hold a "Saltsjobaden II" workshop in 2003 or early 2004. The Bureau agreed that this would be timely and welcomed any such initiative of the Swedish government.

III. KIEV MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE) AND THE FUNDING OF CORE ACTIVITIES

9. The secretariat explained that preparations were well underway for the Kiev Ministerial Conference. Mr Dovland informed the Bureau that the Task Force on Compliance and Enforcement, for which he represented Norway and the Convention, was making some progress in preparing guidelines on compliance and implementation. He hoped that the final document might raise some relevant issues, such as meeting reporting deadlines, with ministers at Kiev.

10. Mr Bull noted that the Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO) was drafting preparations that would be submitted to the Committee on Environmental Policy in November. The Convention would need to indicate its position, with regard to presenting a funding instrument to the Kiev conference, at the next WGSO session in July.

11. The Bureau agreed that the 1999 Gothenburg ministerial request for action on a means for securing stable, long-term funding for the Core Activities should be addressed at or before the Kiev conference. It further agreed that the two-track approach should be continued, providing for either:

(a) A Protocol and Decision, adopted and taken respectively at the twentieth session of the Executive Body (EB20) in December, with the Protocol being opened for signature at Kiev; or,

- (b) A Decision only taken at EB20 with the Executive Body sending a message to ministers at Kiev pointing to the potential of the voluntary funding instrument to achieve the Gothenburg goal of “stable, long-term funding arrangements” through:
- (i) the application of an assessed scale of contributions (based on the UN scale); and
 - (ii) regular reporting of the contributions made.

12. The Bureau requested the secretariat to draft a document on its behalf for WGSO informing it of the proposals and requesting the necessary provisions to be made at Kiev. After circulation and approval by the Bureau the document would be submitted to WGSO for consideration.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

13. The chairman drew attention to the communication received from Denmark indicating that it could no longer support its expert on the Implementation Committee (IC). The Bureau very much regretted this action by Denmark and noted the problems this may cause IC. Mr Szell pointed out that under the rules without Denmark’s support it was not possible to replace the expert on the committee. It was agreed that IC should continue until the next Executive Body session without the expert from Denmark.

V. TRUST FUNDS

14. The secretariat drew attention to the state of the Trust Funds. Recent contributions from Slovenia and Canada had provided the resources for the secretariat’s web server that was being used for the 2002 questionnaire. Canada and Switzerland had also provided resources for revising and reprinting the 1999 brochure on the Convention. While the contributions to the EMEP Protocol Trust Fund were in general meeting the requirements, voluntary contributions to the Core Activities other than those covered by the EMEP Protocol met only a small proportion of the budget.

15. There had been only small contributions to the Trust Fund for supporting participation of countries with economies in transition, though Canada and Switzerland had announced their intention to contribute to the fund. While the small number of contributions did not present an immediate problem with the level of support currently being offered, there was little scope for extending support to those countries eligible unless more contributions were forthcoming.

16. The secretariat informed the Bureau that a new local project Trust Fund had been established and it was planned that this would eventually replace the New York Trust Fund providing support to countries with economies in transition. The new fund would provide more flexibility for use of funds, for example it could be used to support translation of documents or support meetings outside Geneva. However, until more funds had been donated the opportunities for increasing the scope of support was limited. The new fund had been identified in the Executive Secretary’s letter to Parties following the nineteenth session of the Executive Body.

VI. KAZAKHSTAN

16. The secretariat drew attention to communications with Kazakhstan regarding assistance with the development of national policies that may enable them to become party to protocols. The

UNECE Regional Advisor had visited Kazakhstan and had reported that an outline of a national plan was being developed. This might better indicate what was required by Kazakhstan.

17. The Bureau stressed that national policies were the responsibilities of Parties and noted that the Convention had always been careful not to interfere with sovereign rights. However, it understood the problems that might be faced by Kazakhstan and suggested that this might be brought to the attention of some Parties who may be able to give advice on a bilateral basis. It was noted that Poland had indicated at the nineteenth session of the Executive Body that it might be able to provide advice to Kazakhstan. The Bureau suggested that the secretariat contact the Polish delegation to indicate Kazakhstan's need for assistance.

VII. LETTER FROM SECRETARIAT ON EXECUTIVE BODY DECISIONS

18. The secretariat drew attention to the current practice of sending a letter from the Executive Secretary to all Parties each year following the session of the Executive Body. The letter informed Parties of the Decisions taken by the Executive Body and indicated, for example, the need for making contributions to Trust Funds. The nature of the letter required that it be sent to foreign ministries, missions as well to Heads of Delegation. It would seem that the Convention was one of the few bodies continuing with this activity, and it had been suggested that the letter was sent just to Heads of Delegation from the Director of the Environment and Human Settlements Division.

19. The Bureau recognized the significant load that this letter placed on the secretariat, acknowledging that individual letters had to be prepared with the different amounts indicated for contributions to Trust Funds, and with several copies of each letter being required for each Party. It also recognized that some delegations had already requested that letters relating to compliance issues be sent from a high level in ECE to their foreign ministries. The Bureau decided that the issue should be put to the Executive Body at its twentieth session in December.

VIII. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

20. International Union of Air Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection Associations (IUAPPA). The Bureau recalled the communication, received by the secretariat in January, from Mr Richard Mills regarding proposals from IUAPPA to UNEP. These were looking to the global application of integrated assessment modelling and global action on long-range Transboundary air pollution. Papers outlining the proposals had been prepared in readiness for the UNEP Governing Council session in February. A letter of general support indicating the strengths available in the Convention had been sent by the secretariat on behalf of the Bureau. Neither the Bureau nor the secretariat had been informed of what had resulted. It was agreed that the secretariat would continue to try to contact Mr Mills to ascertain any developments.

21. Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET). Mr Bull informed the Bureau that he had attended the EANET Intergovernmental Meeting and the Scientific Advisory Committee of EANET in November 2001. A report had been circulated to Bureau members and was available on the Convention's web site. Following the nineteenth session of the Executive Body the secretariat had e-mailed both the new (UNEP) secretariat and the former (Japanese) secretariat for EANET, informing them of the availability of the report from the Executive Body session and in particular of the Executive Body's wish that EANET representatives be invited to meetings and sessions of its subsidiary bodies. As no response had been made by the recipients,

the Bureau suggested that the secretariat write a follow up letter to ensure that the e-mails had been received.

22. Second International Nitrogen Conference, October 14-18 2001, Potomac, Maryland, US
Mr Harnett informed the Bureau that the conference had taken place and a summary statement and publications were available. It was noted that the secretariat had been informed of proposals from conference for setting up a body to consider the issue of nitrogen at the global level. This might be analogous to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It was understood that these proposals were to be discussed with representatives of UNEP at about the time of the session of the Governing Council. While no communication had been received subsequently, Mr Harnett understood that there were no plans for UNEP to take this forward.

IX. STRATEGIES AND POLICIES REVIEW

23. Mr Harnett informed the Bureau that executive summary of the 2000 Review of Strategies and Policies, as approved at the nineteenth session of the Executive Body was nearing completion. The United States consultant had almost finished the necessary work and the United States would organize the printing of the document within the next few weeks to ensure its readiness well before the Executive Body session in December.

24. The secretariat provided an update on progress with the 2002 questionnaire. The electronic version had been made available to Parties through the Internet. Several Parties had responded favourably to this, though some problems with the software had been identified. The deadline for submissions had passed but some Parties had indicated that they would be a little late. Approximately 30 Parties had made some response to the questionnaire though less than 20 had completed their submissions by the deadline. The Bureau welcomed the new Internet based questionnaire and hoped it would aid analysis and dissemination of replies. It strongly recommended the secretariat to get feedback from those filling in the questionnaire so that improvements could be made for the next round of questions.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ISSUES

25. The secretariat informed the Bureau that there were plans to hold a meeting of representatives of the Bureaux of the five ECE environmental conventions on 2 July 2002. Invitations were to be sent out by the Chairman of the Aarhus Convention as it was planned that the meeting would discuss public participation issues as well as cross-cutting issues related to implementation. The Bureau took note of the proposed meeting and recognized the importance of having suitable representation of stakeholders and NGOs representing the public in its meetings at all levels. They recognized, however, that any initiatives to be taken on further developing or extending public participation in the work of the Convention should, indeed must, come from the Convention's own Parties. Some members of the Bureau advised caution in raising specific issues simply because of activities taking place in other bodies.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

26. Mr Ballaman informed the Bureau of the outcome of a preparatory meeting for a workshop on communications strategy that had taken place earlier in the week. Other members of the Bureau and the secretariat had attended. The plans for the workshop, that was expected to take place towards the end of 2002, were proceeding well. The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) had offered to organize the workshop and a number of Parties had indicated they might provide

financial support. Mr Chadwick (SEI) had agreed to develop the plans further in collaboration with members of preparatory group and the secretariat.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

27. The Chairman reported on his recent meeting with the new Executive Secretary of ECE, Mrs Brigita Schmognerova. He had been pleased with the interest that she had shown in the work of the Convention, which had provided him with the opportunity to explain about the successful contribution that the Convention had made to improved air quality in Europe and North America, as well as provide information on the monitoring and scientific activities supporting the development of protocols. He had also drawn attention to the important and effective contribution of the secretariat to the Convention's work. He was concerned however, that Mrs Schmognerova had indicated her intention to reorganize the secretariat possibly moving resources from some ongoing activities to enable support for new areas of work. She indicated that no decisions had yet been made but the Chairman had not felt reassured that the Convention's secretariat would be unaffected.

28. The secretariat had enquired about the possibility of the Convention's accounts being managed in Euros, as had been requested by the delegation of Italy at the nineteenth session of the Executive Body. The secretariat had found that rule 105.7 of the UN Finance Manual indicates that contributions will be assessed in US dollars, so the use of Euros is not currently possible.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

29. The Bureau agreed that it would meet at the time of the session of the Working Group on Strategies, 24 – 27 September. It was suggested that the Bureau meet during the morning just prior to the start of the Working Group session, and completes its business, if necessary, in the early evening.