

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
19 April 2006, Geneva**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau

The first meeting of the Bureau in 2006 was chaired by the Chairman of the Executive Body, Mr. M. Williams (United Kingdom), and was attended by Vice-Chairpersons Mr. R. Ballaman (Switzerland), Mr. A. Jagusiewicz (Poland), Mr. S. Michel (Switzerland), Ms. S. Nurmi (Finland), Mr. J. Schneider (Austria) and Mr W. Harnett (United States). Mr. B. Achermann (Switzerland) Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Effects was invited to attend on behalf of Mr. Gregor (Germany) who sent his apologies. Mr. K. Bull attended for the UNECE secretariat. Mr. M. Vainio and Mr. A. Zuber (European Commission) attended as observers.

**I. NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 2005
(EBBUREAU/2005/3) INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE
ON AGENDA**

1. The note had been circulated and placed on the Convention's website at www.unece.org/env/eb/bureau. With regard to the consultations with the Russian Federation and Ukraine, Mr. Williams indicated that the UK Minister had drawn the attention of his Russian counterpart to the Convention and the need for consultations.

**II. OPENING THE CONVENTION TO COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE
UNECE REGION**

2. The Bureau welcomed the paper prepared by Mr Lindemann (Germany) that provided a technical legal background for considering the possibility for opening the Convention. It also took note of a paper prepared by the secretariat.

3. Bureau members noted problems associated with opening the protocols given the obligations on Parties and the difficulties experienced by other conventions gaining the necessary ratifications required for entry into force of an amendment. Some Bureau members questioned whether countries outside UNECE would be interested in joining UNECE instruments. They noted that there was still plenty of work to do to implement protocols in the UNECE region. Mr. Bull noted that, as

requested by the Executive Body, the secretariat had sent letters to ministers/missions of all UN countries drawing attention to possibilities for them to attend Convention meetings, especially those held in Geneva.

4. The Bureau agreed that there was a need to present the necessary information to the Executive Body and requested the secretariat to redraft the documents received into a single document for consideration by the Executive Body.

III. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES FOR NGOS

5. The Bureau noted the request from the Executive Body to consider this issue and Mr Bull outlined the procedures used by other UNECE Conventions as well as those used by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

6. The Bureau agreed that the UN accredited list was a good starting point but that a little more flexibility might be desirable. This should be balanced against being too permissive and avoiding unnecessary time and effort on any additional procedures. It invited the secretariat to prepare proposals for submission to the Executive Body in December in time for its next meeting in September.

IV. UNECE REFORM PROCESS

7. Mr. Bull provided information on the reform process that was now being implemented under the recently appointed UNECE Executive Secretary, Mr. Marek Belka, former Prime Minister of Poland. He noted that UNECE member States had indicated that environmental work, including that for the conventions, was their highest priority. As a result the secretariat had been reorganized and the newly renamed Environment, Housing and Land Management Division had gained several new members of staff. This would not affect the Convention directly though an economics unit now working in the division might be able to provide input to the Convention's work.

V. PREPARATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

8. The Bureau noted that the preparations for the Ministerial Conference in Belgrade were under way and the Working Group of Senior Officials and its Executive Committee had held meetings to discuss the scope and possible content of the Conference. Mr. Bull stressed the current lack of emphasis in WGSO documents on the work of the UNECE conventions, though the most recent Executive Committee document had stressed the need to strengthen implementation of the conventions and protocols. That document also noted the European Union was suggesting that an independent evaluation be made of the effectiveness of UNECE's environmental legal and 'soft law' instruments. The Bureau requested Mr. Bull to keep it informed of developments.

VI. FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD)

9. The secretariat noted the outcome of the UNECE Regional Implementation Forum that took place in December 2005. The Forum Chair's report from that meeting would be presented to CSD 14 in New York in early May. Mr. Williams informed the Bureau that he had been invited to present the work of the Convention at the UNECE session and that the UK Minister, Mr. Morley, would chair this session. IUAPPA and SEI were planning a side event and had asked Mr. Williams to speak.

10. Mr. Bull noted that he was to make a presentation on behalf of the Environmental Management Group, an inter-UN agency group, that had produced a report on air pollution. He had also been invited to speak at a European Commission side event.

11. The Bureau welcomed the participation in the CSD 14 session and hoped that the profile of the Convention and its effectiveness could be highlighted.

VII. REVIEW/REVISION OF PROTOCOLS

12. Mr. Ballaman provided the Bureau with an overview of progress on the review/revision of the three most recent protocols to the Convention. For persistent organic pollutants (POPs) the review had been completed in December and the steps towards adding substances were now being taken. The review of the Protocol on Heavy Metals should be completed in December 2006. Discussions on the requirements for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol were ongoing but were planned according to the envisaged timetable for completion at the end of 2007.

VIII. FINANCIAL MATTERS

13. Mr Bull outlined the situation with regard to the Trust Fund to support countries with economies in transition ("project E112") and the EMEP Trust Fund to support activities of the secretariat, e.g. travel to meetings where no support was available from lead or host countries, (the LPA Trust Fund).

14. There had been some indications from a small number of countries that contributions would be forthcoming for E112, but the sums fell far short of the more ambitious target set by the Executive Body in December. It would be possible to fund planned workshops and the Implementation Guides, but no new initiatives (workshops or national implementation plans) were likely at present.

15. The LPA Trust Fund had had very few contributions over the last five years and the funds had fallen to a point where it might severely limit travel to meetings. Mr Bull noted that the fund might also be needed to support the writing of the Strategies and Policies document and this would leave little for any other activities. He invited the Bureau to consider possibilities for making contributions from their own countries.

IX. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2007 AND 2008

16. The secretariat provided information on the dates of meetings of the Executive Body and the main subsidiary bodies scheduled for 2007:

16-20 April 2007 [#]	39th session Working Group on Strategies and Review
29-31 August 2007	26th session Working Group on Effects
3-5 September 2007	31st session EMEP Steering Body
17-21 September 2007	40th session Working Group on Strategies and Review
10-14 December 2007	24th session Executive Body

The Bureau agreed detailed dates and timings for meetings in 2006 and took note of the weeks allotted for 2007. It agreed similar dates should be reserved for meetings in 2008. The secretariat agreed to keep the website up to date so that delegates were informed.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

17. Mr Ballaman reported on the attendance of Mr. Williams and himself at a workshop on nitrogen that was held in Paris under the International Nitrogen Initiative. UNEP had been the main organizers but they had indicated that they were not in a position to undertake future coordination work on nitrogen. Mr Ballaman noted that the Convention's input to the workshop had been appreciated.

18. Mr. Harnett informed the Bureau that the United States was looking into the application of the critical loads approach as a possible mechanism to aid future decisions on emission controls. He would keep the Bureau informed of developments.

19. The Bureau noted that the annual meeting of the bureaux of the UNECE Conventions and the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy would take place on 27 June in Geneva. Mr. Williams and Mr. Ballaman indicated that they planned to attend.

XI. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

20. The Bureau agreed that it would be useful to hold a meeting at the time of the September meeting of the Working Group on Strategies and Review and requested the secretariat to circulate possible dates. The Bureau also noted that it was important to hold a High-level Coordinating Group meeting with air pollution staff from the European Commission, if possible in 2006. The secretariat and the European Commission representatives would explore possibilities.

[#] This date was agreed on 23rd May after the meeting. It was changed from an earlier proposal to avoid clashes with other meetings.