

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
1 September 2008, Geneva**

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau

The second meeting of the Bureau in 2008 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. D. Fantozzi (United States), Mr. T. Johannessen (Norway), Ms. M. Lešnjak (Slovenia) and Mr. J. Schneider (Austria). Ms. K. Scavo (United States) was invited to attend the meeting as observer since Mr. Fantozzi was unable to attend at the start of the meeting. Mr. A. Fretheim (Norway), Mr. M. Rico (France) and Mr. A. Zuber (observer for the European Commission) sent their apologies. Mr. K. Bull attended for the UNECE secretariat.

1. In relation to items on the agenda, the Chair noted that the Bureau meeting this time was unusually taking place before the session of the Working Group on Effects and the EMEP steering Body because of the changed dates for the Working Group on Strategies and Review.

**I. NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF 14 APRIL 2008
(EB BUREAU/2008/1) INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE
ON THE AGENDA**

2. The note of the meeting had been circulated and comments received incorporated. **The Bureau agreed that it should be placed on the Convention's website at www.unece.org/env/eb/bureau.**

II. TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY

3. The Bureau took note of the draft agenda for the Executive Body session that had been circulated by the secretariat. It also noted the draft document on a future strategy for the Convention prepared by the secretariat and provided comments to enable it to be finalized.

4. It was noted that there had been suggestions to establish a more permanent ad hoc group of legal experts that could be called upon by the working Group on

strategies and Review when needed. This might be proposed to the Executive Body in December.

5. The Bureau discussed the proposals made by Sweden and the Netherlands to organize a 30th anniversary session of the Executive Body in 2009 with a possible signing ceremony for a revised protocol. The Dutch proposal, which would aim to hold the session in an EECCA country was dependent upon a signing ceremony. The Bureau felt that, with current progress, a revised protocol would not be ready for signing by the end of 2009 (the date of the anniversary). The Bureau discussed a possible publication (book or brochure) that might draw attention to some of the important activities of the Convention such the EECCA action plan and outreach. Such a brochure could provide an overview of the last 30 years and highlight key issues.

6. The Bureau agreed to maintain a dialogue with the Netherlands and Sweden to see what might be done to celebrate 30 years of the Convention and for a signing ceremony session (which might be separate events). With regard to an anniversary publication/brochure, the Bureau agreed to discuss an outline for a document at its next meeting.

III. REVISED WORKPLAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BODY

7. The secretariat outlined its plans for issuing a document as an amendment to the Convention's workplan following decisions of the Bureau to amend it following proposals being made to the secretariat. Such decision making was provided in the revised mandate of the Bureau. The secretariat suggested that the amendments be reported to the Executive Body for approval through a formal document, prepared by the secretariat, reporting on activities of the Bureau. This document would simply record when the Bureau had met, note that its reports could be consulted on the web site, and list the changes to the workplan agreed.

8. The Bureau agreed .

9. The Bureau welcomed the developments under EMEP and stressed the need for continuity through the anticipated changes in the coming year. It thanked Mr. Schneider for his contribution to the work of EMEP and his support to the work of the Bureau and the Convention.

10. Mr Johannessen suggested that the strategies of EMEP and the Working Group on Effects should be harmonized to provide a scientific strategy for the Convention. Mr. Williams noted that the Executive Body had not developed a long-term strategy for the Convention. It was suggested that such a strategy should build upon the scientific strategies but include policy issues.

11. The Bureau agreed that it would be useful to consider developing a long-term strategy for the Convention. While such a strategy should focus on air pollution, it should not ignore the links with other issues and it should be developed through strategic reflection on recent developments under the Convention (e.g. very long-range transport, the nitrogen cycle). Developing such

a plan could involve input from outside the Convention. It should particularly engage countries with economies in transition to ensure their input to the strategy. The Bureau agreed to present a draft proposal to the Executive Body in December. The time frame for the strategy could be similar to that envisaged by EMEP and the Working Group on Effects (about 10 years), and the strategy could provide guidance for work following adoption of any new or revised protocols in the next few years. It was agreed that the idea be raised at the Working Group on Strategies and Review to gain the reaction of delegations.

IV. HEAVY METALS

12. Mr. Ballaman noted that, following decisions by the Executive Body, the Task Force on Heavy Metals had not been charged with specific actions with regard to any revision of the Protocol on Heavy Metals. The Task Force was looking at issues of updating the Best Available Techniques, as listed in the guidance annex III, and had planned a capacity-building workshop in Armenia to be held in May.

V. POPs

13. Mr. Ballaman outlined plans for discussions on the revision of the Protocol on POPs at the forty-first session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review. The obligations related to substances would be discussed in plenary while a group of technical experts would work on possible revisions to the annexes to the Protocol. The technical group would report to the Working Group towards the end of its session.

14. The Bureau noted that the forty-second session of the Working Group was scheduled for the week of 1-5 September 2008. This would enable Parties to the Protocol to formally propose amendments to the Protocol after the session but before the 90-day limit specified in the Protocol.

VI. EMISSION REPORTING GUIDELINES

15. Mr. Ballaman outlined plans for discussion of the Guidelines at the forty-first session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review. The report from the ad hoc Group of Legal Expert provided clear guidance on what might be done to improve the text of the Guidelines. It was anticipated that a revised text would be agreed. This would be forwarded to the EMEP Steering Body for information and to the Executive Body for adoption. The Group of Legal Experts had stressed the limitations on strengthening the Guidelines further. It had noted that this could only be done through amendment of the Convention and/or its protocols.

16. The Bureau noted the work being done and hoped that the Guidelines would be available for the Executive Body session in December.

VII. REVISION OF THE GOTHENBURG PROTOCOL

17. Mr. Ballaman informed the Bureau of planned discussion on revision of the Gothenburg Protocol at the forty-first session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review. It was open for discussion whether a revised protocol or a new one would be most appropriate. While major changes were anticipated, the Working Group was only about to start its discussions. Mr. Ballaman noted that the work on integrated assessment modelling needed to consider such issues as the baseline scenario, the use of expert estimates for when official data were not available, and possible measures for EECCA countries that would allow accession (e.g. BAT without full optimization).

18. The Bureau noted the plans and drew attention to the need to consider annex revisions, the importance of taking EU plans into consideration, and the need to invite North American Parties to consider how they might involve themselves in the revision process.

VIII. EECCA ACTION PLAN

19. The secretariat noted that fund raising to support the Action Plan had been slow, so new initiatives had not been possible in the EECCA region. Most donations received were used to support participation at meetings in Geneva. The Czech-funded project with Moldova was awaiting final agreement from Moldova on the proposed contract with the UN. The Dutch funded project with five West Balkans countries had now started. So far only Albania and Montenegro had responded positively to the invitation to participate in the project. Follow-up letters had been sent to the other countries to stimulate a response from ministries. The secretariat noted the plans for the heavy metals workshop in Armenia in May; this was an initiative of Armenia that had been taken up by Germany, the lead country of the Task Force on Heavy Metals. There were also tentative plans for a workshop in Kazakhstan on techno-economic issues; this was being organized by the lead countries of the Expert Group on Techno-economic Issues.

20. The Bureau took note of the activities and welcomed the initiatives of lead countries to hold workshops in the EECCA region.

21. The secretariat informed the Bureau of communications it had had with the Russian delegation regarding its participation in discussions at the Working Group on Strategies and Review. It was understood that participation of delegates was proving difficult at this time. Discussions between the secretariat and the Russian mission in Geneva suggested that a possible reorganization of ministries in the Russian Federation could lead to a much improved situation in the future.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

22. Mr. Fretheim informed the Bureau of the recent meeting of the Implementation Committee. The second meeting of the year would be held in July. Mr. Fretheim noted the heavy workload of the Committee and the associated work of the secretariat. Funds had been donated for a consultant to assist with the in-depth review of protocols in 2008.

X. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

23. The secretariat reported on activities of the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum (GAPF), of which the Convention was a member, being represented on the Steering Committee by the secretariat and the Chair. The Chair noted plans for a Forum workshop, on the co-benefits of addressing air pollution and climate change; details of the proposal agreed with the Swedish Development Agency, Sida, (the major funder of the Forum) had been circulated to the Bureau. The workshop was scheduled for September in Geneva or Stockholm. The Forum had requested that the workshop be held “under the Convention” and included in the Executive Body’s workplan for 2008.

24. Members of the Bureau expressed concern that the information provided on the GAPF workshop suggested that participation would be by invitation only; this was not current practice for any workshop held under the Convention. There was also concern that the organization of the workshop, though involving the secretariat and the Chair, was nominally the responsibility of an NGO. Again this was not common practice; the Bureau felt that there could be no proper control exercised by the Convention, its Parties or its secretariat. The Bureau agreed it should turn down the request to include the workshop in the workplan. However, it also agreed to request GAPF to share the workshop results with the Convention so that Parties could benefit from the conclusions reached.¹

25. The Bureau noted the need to consider criteria for “ambassadors for the Convention” as requested by the Executive Body. The secretariat provided the Bureau with a draft list of criteria to aid its deliberations. Bureau members agreed to provide written comments to the secretariat within 3 to 4 weeks.

26. The secretariat provided information on communications with the UNEP secretariat of the Malé Declaration. It proposed sending the information provided by UNEP, in particular the outline of future work under the Declaration, to the Convention’s subsidiary bodies. This would help assess where links could be built between the two agreements. The scientific and technical work was expected to be targeted.

XI. UPDATING THE 2008 WORKPLAN

27. The Bureau noted the need to take decisions on amendments to the current workplan, provided by its mandate approved at the twenty-fifth session of the Executive Body. The secretariat drew attention to the following items for addition to the workplan:

¹ Following communications between the secretariat, the Head of the Swedish delegation to the Working Group on Strategies and Review, and the GAP Forum secretariat, it was confirmed that: (a) the workshop would be hosted by Sweden, which would act as lead country and ensure reporting; and (b) the workshop would be open to experts from Parties to the Convention. Based on this information, members of the Bureau agreed by consensus to include the workshop in the 2008 workplan of the Executive Body.

- (a) A report on Guidelines for monitoring to be submitted to the twenty-seventh session of the Working Group on Effects by its Bureau;
- (b) The workshop of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution to be held on 9 to 13 June 2008;
- (c) A plan for a Convention Strategy to be submitted to the twenty-sixth session of the Executive Body by its Bureau;
- (d) Joint Expert Group on Dynamic Modelling to hold its ninth meeting on 20 to 22 October 2008 in Sitges, Spain;
- (e) Workshop on air pollution-climate change co-benefits to be held in Stockholm 17 to 19 September 2008.²

28. The Bureau agreed the amendments to the workplan in principle and requested the secretariat to circulate it with the draft corrigendum to the workplan for its final agreement.

XII. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS FOR MEETINGS

29. Mr. Bull informed the Bureau that he had followed up on the Executive Body's request to determine the reasons for the late documents provided to the recent session of the Executive Body and to seek assurances of improved service in the future. He had sent a memo to Mr. Almoman, Director, Central Planning and Coordination Service of UN Conference Services, in January but had received no reply. He had sent a further memo in March reminding Mr. Almoman of the information required, but again no reply had been received.

30. The Bureau expressed its disappointment at the lack of response from Mr. Almoman. It requested its Chair to write to Mr. Almoman stressing the need for a reply since the Executive Body had requested its Heads of Delegation to be informed of the follow-up.

XIII. ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

31. The secretariat reminded the Bureau that there had been agreement at the Executive Body session to make decision 2006/11, on the accreditation of non-governmental organizations, provisional for a further year.

32. The Bureau had no suggestions for revising decision 2006/11 but agreed to discuss the issue again at its next meeting.

XIV. SECRETARIAT STAFFING

33. Mr. Bull noted that Albena Karadjova had successfully applied for a fixed-term appointment in the secretariat. She would continue with her responsibilities with the Implementation Committee and with the Working Group on Strategies and Review, but she would also be secretary of the Industrial Accidents Convention. It

² Item added in accordance with decision taken as indicated in footnote 1.

was anticipated that the IA Convention would occupy only a small percentage of her time; most of the work for that Convention would be done by two other support staff. One of these would provide important input to the work of the Air Convention. In this way, the support to the Air Convention should continue at the same level or even increase.

34. With Ms Karadjova's appointment, the secretariat was discussing how to make effective use of the staff available. In particular, Ms Tea Aulavuo had quickly adapted to the work of the Convention and was ready to assume new responsibilities. Mr. Bull would inform the Bureau of developments.

35. Mr. Bull also noted that he was due to retire from the UN at the end of 2008. Plans for his replacement were pending as the Director's post for the Division was still vacant following the retirement of Mr. Barlund. The Bureau expressed concern that Mr. Bull's retirement at the end of 2008 could present difficulties for completing the necessary work and actions after the Executive Body session in December. The Bureau recognized that extensions beyond retirement in the UN were only given by the Secretary-General in exceptional circumstances, but the Chair indicated he would support such a request for this if it proved necessary.

XV. OTHER BUSINESS

36. The secretariat noted the recent short article on the report of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution in UNECE Weekly. This had failed to mention either the Task Force or the Convention. This had been drawn to the attention of the editors so that such oversights did not happen in the future. The secretariat noted that there were always opportunities to put articles into UNECE Weekly to highlight the work of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies.

XVI. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

37. The Bureau agreed to meet at the time of the next session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in September 2008 and provisionally agreed Monday 1 September at 10 a.m. The secretariat would confirm this and make the necessary arrangements for the meeting room.

38. The Bureau noted the need for a High-level Coordinating Group meeting with the European Commission. Andre Zuber would be consulted for a suitable time and place.