

EXECUTIVE BODY FOR THE CONVENTION ON  
LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

Bureau to the Executive Body

**NOTE OF THE BUREAU MEETING**

Monday, 12 December 2016, 14:00 – 18:00 hrs, room S1, Palais des Nations

Attendance: The following Bureau members attended: Mr. W. Harnett (Chair of WGSR), Ms. L. Rouil (Chair of the EMEP SB), Ms. I. Rabago (Chair of WGE), Mr. R. Ballaman (Switzerland), and Ms. J. Kerr (Canada). Mr. P. Grennfelt (former Chair of WGE) and Mr. M. Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee) attended by telephone. Mr. A. Zuber attended as an observer on behalf of the EU. Mr. M. Keiner, Mr. S. Ludwiczak, Mr. K. Olendrzynski, Ms. F. Ilg-Hirsch, Ms. A. Novikova and Ms. C. Sanz Noriega from the ECE secretariat attended. The meeting was chaired by Ms. A. Engleryd, Chair of the Executive Body.

Mr. Keiner welcomed the members of the Executive Body Bureau. Highlighting the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA) initiative, launched at the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, Mr. Keiner encouraged the Bureau to further promote the BACA initiative, which is still open for countries that wish to submit voluntary actions. Prompted by the observer from the European Union, Mr. Keiner explained that there was ongoing coordination and information exchange between UNECE and UNEP, formalized by means of an MoU, also in view of the theme for UNEA-3, which will be on pollution (including air pollution). The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will also provide an opportunity to further discuss cross-cutting themes with all agencies involved.

**1. *Preparations for the 54<sup>th</sup> session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Body***

The Bureau discussed the changes to the agendas of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (Working Group) and Executive Body, given the time limitations for the Working Group. The Bureau agreed to the proposed addition of an agenda item on election of officers to the Working Group agenda and to move item 5b) “Air pollution abatement and the Sustainable Development Goals” to the Executive Body agenda.

The Chair of the Executive Body explained changes in the proposed sequence for addressing items during the Executive Body session, namely to deal with the segment on status of ratification under item 5b) Policy right after item 4) Matters arising from the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

The Chair of the Working Group briefed the Bureau of the proposed plans to organize a special segment at the fifty-fifth session of the Working Group, focused on “air pollution and agriculture.” As provisionally discussed with the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen, the Task Force would organize such a one-day special segment, holding its meeting back-to-back.

Mr. Ballaman, in his capacity as member of the Ad-Hoc Policy Review Group charged with preparing a response to the 2016 scientific assessment, briefed the Bureau of the Group's main findings, outlining its main priorities and the themes the group was working on. In line with its mandate (Decision 2016/1), the Group was planning to highlight some of the proposed priorities for the 2018-2019 workplan (which the Bureau, in cooperation with the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the secretariat could then include in the draft to be prepared for the Executive Body's consideration and adoption) and elements for updating the Long-Term Strategy, for the consideration by the EB. The observer from the European Union reminded the Bureau that the risk of widening the gap between Parties more advanced in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols and Parties in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia had to be considered when thinking about further developments under the Convention, such as an extension of protocols or the inclusion of new pollutants.

## ***2. Issues arising from the second joint meeting of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects (WGE)***

The Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects gave an update on the outcome of the 2nd joint meeting of both subsidiary bodies (Geneva, 13–16 September 2016). They highlighted the outcome of three thematic sessions (on links to climate change, benzo[a]pyrene and ozone) that enabled in-depth discussions and helped to formulate priorities for future research. A considerable part of the joint session was devoted to outreach and cooperation opportunities with partner organizations including WHO, UNEP, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). They also underlined that the approach to merge sessions has worked well and that sessions would be further integrated in the future.

The observer from the European Commission informed the Bureau about the fact that the contract for the emission inventory review project, under the EU directive 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, had been awarded to UBA Austria (that hosts the EMEP Centre on Emission Inventories and Projections).

## ***3. Capacity-building***

The secretariat provided an update on the capacity building and awareness raising activities carried out since May 2016, namely its involvement in the organization of the air quality segment of the Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference in Batumi (June 2016) and dissemination of a brochure for decision-makers at this conference, organization of a roundtable in Kazakhstan to present the results of the legislation analysis, a consultation meeting to further support Armenia in improving its emission reports, a sub-regional workshop in Minsk co-organized with the secretariat to the Protocol on PRTRs and support provided to the EECCA Coordinating Group in organizing its meeting in St-Petersburg.

The secretariat highlighted that in the 2016 reporting round all Parties in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia reported their emission data to the Convention. At the same time, continued support should be provided to EECCA countries to improve quality and completeness of the reported data.

The secretariat referred to a concept note it prepared to outline the proposed capacity building activities in 2017-2020 and their estimated costs for consideration by the Bureau and

potential funding. A brief overview of activities carried out by the secretariat in 2014-2016 was posted as an informal document to the webpage of the 36th session of the Executive Body.

#### **4. *Cooperation with CCAC and other outreach activities***

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body briefed the Bureau about possible cooperation with the CCAC. The CCAC would like to cooperate with the Convention on a regional assessment report on SLCPs for the European region. The Bureau agreed that if such a cooperation would go forward, materials and information presently available should be used, but that no new modelling could be carried out without the provision of additional resources by the CCAC. In addition, the Bureau emphasized that the contribution by the Convention to the report need be visible.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body also briefed the Bureau about the possibility to work with the CCAC on reviewing black carbon inventories which could lead to improvements of the black carbon data. This could go hand-in-hand with a review of the Supporting National Action and Planning on SLCPs (SNAP) tool under CCAC. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body noted that there might be a possibility to apply for funding for this project. It was also noted that the communique from the CCAC High-Level Assembly in Marrakech during COP 22 makes reference to the guidelines on black carbon inventories under the Convention. The Bureau agreed to further discuss the joint project on the black carbon inventories review and the SNAP review.

The EMEP Chair also briefed the Bureau about linkages and possible joint work with the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Services (CAMS). The CAMS could potentially provide EUR 800,000 to get access to near-real time air pollutant monitoring data, especially in the EECCA countries. There was a need to involve the EMEP Chemical Coordinating Centre in this effort. It was highlighted that this was an interesting opportunity which could lead to significantly enhanced visibility for the Convention.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body will continue contacts with CCAC and Copernicus on the cooperation opportunities.

In addition, the EMEP Chair also reported on a recent meeting under the North-East Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), in which the work under the Convention was commended and further steps to create a similar policy framework in North-East Asia were discussed. NEASPEC had proposed to set up a similar structure to the Convention in North-East Asia. There were continued good opportunities for Convention-NEASPEC partnership. The important role of the EMEP Task Force on Hemispheric Transport for Air Pollution (HTAP) in the outreach efforts was recognized.

#### **5. *Financing***

The Bureau discussed a number of issues with regard to the financing of activities under the Convention:

- *Coordinating Centre on Effects (CCE), hosted by the Netherlands, and the effects-oriented activities under the Convention*

The former Chair of WGE reported that a short-term solution for financing of CCE activities (although reduced in scope) had been found with the generous cash contributions (exceeding in total 150,000 EUR) from Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Norway and the Nordic Council of Ministers, in the absence of the national (Dutch) financing in 2017. The long-term solution would require finding a Party to take over the responsibility for the center. There were currently talks with potential candidate countries. The Bureau agreed that in order to facilitate a smooth transition, the EB should task the EB Bureau to establish, intersessionally, new draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the successor of CCE. The draft ToR would then be forwarded for the consideration of the EB at its 37th session in December 2017. In addition, the former Chair of WGE also drew the attention of the Bureau to the limited funding (less than 25% of approved budget) available for the effects oriented activities under WGE and the need to ensure long-term funding for these core activities under the Convention.

- *Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen, the secretariat of which will begin to cease as of spring 2017 in the absence of new funding*

The EB Chair reported that there were ongoing discussions with Denmark on possible support for TFRN. Further clarification on this issue was needed. The Chair highlighted that the work of Task Forces should generally continue to be financed by lead countries.

- *Travel of participants from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, in accordance with decision 2006/13*

The secretariat briefed the Bureau that the currently available budget would only cover travel of participants from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia for the WGSR session in May/June 2017, but not any other meetings in 2017. The EB Vice-Chair from Switzerland announced that funds would be made available by his country to ensure travel of participants from Central Asia and Azerbaijan and to support capacity-building activities managed by the secretariat in these countries.

- *Activities in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and continuation of the financing the capacity building programme under the Convention*

The secretariat explained that funding for capacity building activities would have to include funding for extrabudgetary posts as staff on posts paid from the regular budget were only allowed to manage extrabudgetary activities for a small fraction of their time (up to 1 month/year), in accordance with UN rules and regulations.

- *Continuation of communication and outreach activities by the secretariat.*

The secretariat mentioned that it was planning to take over the funding for the extrabudgetary post for outreach and communications that is currently funded by Germany (as of November 2017).

With regards to funding, the Bureau agreed that the secretariat should write tailored fund-raising letters to Ministers of Environment – in accordance with agreed procedures, through the Geneva-based permanent missions (representing the Ministries of Foreign Affairs) taking into account the different priorities, showing the added value of the Convention (contribution to SDGs, synergies with climate change, etc.) and raising pertinent financing needs (co-funding centres under WGE, extrabudgetary staff positions, financing the travel of participants from EECCA countries).

Furthermore, the Swiss Vice-Chair of the Bureau proposed that an overview be developed to indicate which Party or organization was contributing financially for which type of activity

under the Convention, to bring about more visibility of donations and transparently inform beneficiary countries. The secretariat was tasked with developing such an overview.

## **6. *Other business***

Further to the updates from the Chairs of the Executive Body, the Working Group, the EMEP Steering Body and the WGE, the Chair of the Implementation Committee provided brief information, through the Chair of the Bureau, highlighting the resolution of the case concerning compliance by the European Union with the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (ref. 5/13 (NO<sub>x</sub>)).

The Chair of the Executive Body informed the Bureau that Sweden was planning to organize another Saltsjobaden workshop in early spring 2018. The observer from the European Union provided information that the European Commission was organizing a Clean Air Forum in October/November 2017, which will focus on urban air pollution.

## **7. *Date, time and place of next meeting***

The Bureau decided hold its next meeting prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (31 May-2 June 2017) in the afternoon of 30 May 2017, focused on financial and strategic issues. The Bureau will also meet in the morning of 11 December 2017, prior to the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Body (Geneva, 11–14 December) starting in the afternoon on 11 December. The Chair invited the Bureau to an informal meeting in Stockholm, early spring 2017. The Bureau also decided to provisionally reserve 11 September 2017 in the morning for a meeting, prior to the third joint session of EMEP/WGE (11-15 September 2017), which would take place should there be a need to take a formal decision (draft terms of reference) on centre replacing the CCE.