

Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range
Transboundary Air Pollution

Bureau

Meeting

Madrid, 22 February 2018

Report of the meeting

I. Attendance

Bureau members: Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Katherine Weber (United States of America) (via teleconference), Mr. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review) (via teleconference), Ms. Laurence Rouil (Chair of the EMEP Steering Body), and Ms. Isaura Rabago (Chair of the Working Group on Effects).

Observers: Mr. Roald Wolters (European Union).

Not present: Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation) and Mr. Manfred Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee).

II. Results of the joint meeting of the Extended Bureaux of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

The Chairs of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects informed about the results of the joint Bureau meeting on 29-21 February 2018.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body stressed the importance of the work of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution for the global outreach of the Convention, drawing attention to the HTAP 2 exercise and the development of the FASST Scenario Screening Tool (FASST). She noted that for the HTAP 2 exercise the necessary input data to answer the questions related to the source-receptor relationships, the hemispheric influence of PM and ozone, had unfortunately not been available. The FASST tool should enable users to see the impact of emission reductions (of methane for example) in one part of the world on another. However, during the model intercomparison phase, different global models produced quite divergent results and not all the pre-defined scenarios had been tested. She informed that, following some personnel changes at Joint Research Centre (JRC), the development of the FASST tool (an adaptation of a JRC tool to the global scale) has been entrusted to scientists at the University of Colorado. The Bureau stressed it was important to ensure that they have a proper understanding of the purpose of the tool as a tool for policy support and the needs of the Convention Parties.

The EU observer added that the JRC had been asked to make a study on impacts of methane emission reductions at the hemispheric level which could have some co-benefits for the work of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution. The Bureau expressed its interest in this study.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body further informed that the Task Force should produce a report on the lessons learned from the HTAP 2 exercise, as well as a synthesis report of the main outcomes of the Task Force's work over the past 4-5 years and the key message about the hemispheric transport of air pollution. The Bureau noted that a simple status report was desirable before the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop in March 2018. The Bureau agreed that the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body would liaise with the Co-Chairs of the Task Force to convey the message.

The Bureau agreed that the science track discussion at the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop should be steered towards identifying the gaps and unanswered questions, as well as to mapping ongoing activities at the global level, given the participation of many organizations from around the world. This will provide a good background information for further discussion within the Convention. It was agreed that the Chair would liaise with the leaders of the science track part and advise them to take this into account.

The Bureau also agreed that the future priorities and expectations from the Task Force should be discussed and that sufficient funding should be available to support the delivery of outputs. It requested the Chair and the EU observer to liaise with the lead parties to confirm their possibilities for continued support to the task force.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects provided a brief overview on the activities of the International Cooperative Programmes (ICPs). The main problem for the ICPs was the lack of participation by some countries. The Bureau noted that the collection of national data and its joint evaluation was a major value added of the Convention and stressed the importance of parties supporting their national monitoring and other research activities and submitting their data for use by the Convention, as well as supporting the participation of their experts in the meetings of the ICPs.

She also drew attention to decreased funding for ICP Forests, which had a big network and numerous requests for its data, although feedback on the use of the data was limited. She further mentioned that the data on PM concentration levels could be useful for ICP materials.

She also noted that the Task Force on Health was using different tools for assessing the impact on health from those used by Centre for Integrated Assessment Modelling. The AIRQ+ software tool contained dose-response relationships to assess the impact on health based on concentration data from various sources. For a regional assessment, the EMEP modelling results should be used. It was noted that as the World Health Organization (WHO) has an interest at the global scale, the Task Force had started working with global modellers and this leads to some methodological issues. The Bureau agreed that there was a need for better communication with the Task Force and that the Convention and WHO should have one message. It also stressed that the Task Force should not diverge from its developed methodology based on integrated assessment modelling and should maintain its scientific focus.

The Bureau agreed that the Chair will explore the opportunities for a small meeting between representatives of WHO, Germany, Switzerland and the Convention in the margins of the Saltjobaden-6 workshop to discuss how to organize the Task Force work in the future.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects updated the Bureau on the handover of the Coordination Centre for Effects to Germany. The Bureau recognized the complexity of the transition and the time needed for a fully operational centre in the new location.

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body reminded that two of the priorities for EMEP in the coming years were the linkages between the scales and the issue of condensables. She informed that there was positive development concerning condensables. The Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections and the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling has been working on resolving the issue. An informal document will be submitted to the fifty-sixth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in May. She also noted that the quality of the emission data should be improved if Parties would consistently use Tier 2 methods for the key sources and that a respective decision will be proposed to the Executive Body in December 2018.

She informed the Bureau that there was a delay in the signing of the contract under the Copernicus programme between the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and NILU (CCC) aimed at strengthening the capacity for collection of near-real time data and the implementation of new monitoring systems, particularly in countries in the Eastern part of Europe.

The Chairs also informed the Bureau about the discussion on the questionnaire with the aim to better understand what data is used by Parties at the national level and to enable better prioritization. The Bureau agreed that the questionnaire should be sent out to the Heads of Delegation to the Working Group on Strategies and Review with a copy to the Heads of Delegation to the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects, as well as to other institutions using the Convention's data, such as OSPAR, AMAP, HELCOM.

The Bureau took note of the brochure on the effects activities developed and presented by the Chair of the Working Group on Effects. It agreed that the brochure was very useful and, after its finalization, it should be sent out by the secretariat together with the letters requesting contributions for 2018 and should be posted on the Convention's website.

III. Preparations for the “Saltsjöbaden” - VI workshop

The Chair informed the Bureau about the status of preparations for the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop. She noted that the very high interest in the event from all over the world. The organizers had not been able to accommodate all participants who had expressed interest and there was a waiting list. All the groups for the parallel sessions were defined and the lists were sent to the group chairs. A questionnaire was also being elaborated to get views and contributions from experts who were not able to participate.

The secretariat informed that it is financing the participation of 15 experts from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) countries in the workshop. The Bureau

stressed that these experts should participate in the session on the EECCA region. The secretariat further informed that it had elaborated and sent out a questionnaire to the participants from EECCA countries to assess the progress and obstacles for ratification of the Convention's protocols to facilitate the discussion at the sub-session focused on EECCA issues.

IV. Preparations for the fifty-sixth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review

The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review updated the Bureau on progress in the elaboration of the revised long-term strategy by the policy review group. The individual chapters were at different stages of preparation, but the overall development of the strategy was on track and a draft revised strategy will be submitted for consideration by the Working Group at its fifty-sixth session in May. She recalled the decision that the official document will be issued in English only, in order to take into account the discussions and outcomes at the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop.

She also informed about the status of preparations for the fifty-sixth session of the Working Group on 22-25 May 2018. The provisional agenda was being finalized with the secretariat and should be submitted within the deadline. She noted that the thematic session on residential heating/wood combustion would be one whole day, while the overall session is planned for three and a half days and would start in the afternoon of 22 May. The other documents for the session were under preparation (reports of the task forces and draft terms of reference).

V. Follow up to the UNEA-3 resolution

As a follow up to the request from the Executive body, the Bureau discussed further the possible further steps to be taken for establishing closer cooperation with UNEP, including possible meetings with UNEP and actions at the level of the Executive Body. It discussed some points raised in comments on the letter being prepared to UNEP on behalf of the Bureau. It decided that the letter should be finalized and sent to UNEP prior to the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop through the secretariat.

The Bureau considered the possibility of organizing a one-day informal segment during the thirty-eighth session of the Executive Body in December 2018 on exchange of views on a possible platform for addressing air pollution globally, with the participation of UNEP and other relevant organizations. The informal segment could be organized over two days, starting in the afternoon of the first day, and continuing in the morning of the second day. The Bureau requested the secretariat to check the possibilities for extending the Executive Body session by one day to accommodate this informal segment.

The Bureau also agreed that a small core group should meet with UNEP representatives after the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop for follow-up discussions.

The secretariat informed that it will participate in the 2018 Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum, including a panel discussion on "Action by Regional Networks and Organizations to Improve Air Quality in Asia Pacific" on 22

March 2018, and in the EANET Science-Policy Dialogue on the 23 March 2018 where it will deliver a presentation on the Convention's current and future work with a focus on the response to the UNEA-3 resolution. At the request of the EANET, it will also highlight some potential areas of collaboration between the Convention/EMEP and EANET. The secretariat will also deliver an invited presentation at the APCAP Science Panel meeting on "CLRTAP mechanism and modality strengthening science and policy intervention in member states" on 23 March. The Bureau agreed that this was a good opportunity to raise the visibility of the Convention in the Asia-Pacific region, to reach out to other regional networks and organizations in view of the UNEA-3 resolution and to convey the messages of the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop. It invited the secretariat to deliver the same key messages mentioned in the draft letter to UNEP and the outcomes of the Saltsjöbaden-6 session on "Clean Air Globally". The Bureau would appreciate if the secretariat shares its draft presentations with it in advance.

VI. Links between climate change and air quality mitigation: contribution to UNFCCC

The secretariat referred to the decision by the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advance (SBSTA) in November 2017 which included a request for information on "improved nutrient use and manure managements towards sustainable and resilient agricultural systems" and invited Parties to UNFCCC and observers to submit such information. It recalled the proposal by the co-Chairs of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen to submit such information, through UNECE as an observer, highlighting the contribution of the Convention with respect to nitrogen management.

The Bureau agreed that it would be good if some Parties could also provide responses in support of the contribution which will be submitted through the UNECE secretariat. The secretariat recalled an indication that Germany might submit a response. Bureau members indicated that Sweden and Switzerland were also considering sending in information.

The Bureau requested the secretariat to remind the Co-Chairs of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen to send the information in due time and to circulate it to the Bureau before submission to the UNFCCC secretariat by the deadline of 31 March 2018.

VII. Capacity-building and awareness-raising to promote ratification and implementation

The secretariat presented the planned capacity-building and awareness raising activities under way or planned for 2018, including support for the participation of EECCA experts in the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projection meeting in April in Bulgaria, the organization of a workshop on the GAINS model at IIASA in October and support to the organization of a meeting of the Coordinating group on EECCA. It also planned five in-country trainings for national experts on emission inventories and two roundtables on national legislation analysis, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. The Bureau encouraged the secretariat to proceed with the implementation of the planned activities.

The Bureau also discussed the follow up to the request by the Executive Body to discuss with the secretariat ways of reaching out to decision-makers in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in order to match the ongoing efforts on capacity building at the technical and expert level with an increased political will (ECE/EB.AIR/140, para. 50(d)). It agreed to invite the ECE regional advisor on environment at its next meeting in Geneva for this discussion.

The Chair recalled the observations made by EECCA representatives at the last EB session that it would help the ratification process if the political visibility of the Convention was higher. The Bureau agreed that more can be done on communication and promotion. There was a need for a communications expert to help decide where and when and in what form to communicate. The Bureau acknowledged that it would be very difficult for Parties to pay for such an extra post in the secretariat and discussed ways how to support these efforts. One way could be for Parties to contribute to such communication and promotion efforts through the work of their own communications experts. The Bureau agreed to further discuss this issue at its next meeting.

VIII. Implementation of the 2018-2019 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

The Bureau discussed the implementation of other tasks assigned to it in the 2018-2019 workplan for the implementation of the Convention under section 5 “Communication and outreach”.

The Bureau considered that the implementation of item 5.3.1. is well on track with the Bureau’s involvement in the organization of the Saltsjöbaden-6 workshop, and the contacts maintained and newly created with UNEP and the Asia Pacific region and other parts of the world.

The Bureau discussed ideas for the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Convention in 2019 (item 5.3.4 of the workplan). It was mentioned that in order to get high attention to the celebration, the presence of ministers would be desirable. To ensure such a presence it was necessary to have a document to be signed by them. One possibility was to have a political declaration, establishing partnership with other organizations. Other Bureau members felt that focusing on a political declaration and formalizing a partnership may distract the attention from the implementation of the long-term strategy and expressed preference for avoiding a negotiated outcome and highlighting the long-term strategy.

The Bureau agreed that an event should be aimed at late 2019 or early 2020, either in the margins of the Executive Body session or in conjunction with another big meeting in Geneva. The Bureau requested the secretariat to check which big meetings were planned in Geneva in late 2019 early 2020 and decided to continue the discussion on this item at its next meeting. It agreed that the Executive Body should make a decision on the event and the timetable at its thirty-eighth session in December 2018.

The Bureau also discussed possibilities for organizing a workshop bringing together relevant actors to discuss ways of collaboration to achieve reductions of air pollutants that are also SLCPs (item 5.3.5). It was recalled that this workplan item was a proposal

from the policy review group. The Bureau agreed that it could be possible to streamline and combine this another workplan item. It decided to discuss this further at its next meeting and provide an update to the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its next session.

IX. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Bureau decide to hold its next two meetings as follows:

- (i) on 22 May 2018 in the morning, prior to the start of the 56th session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review and Monday, and
- (ii) on 10 September 2018 in the morning, prior to the start of the Fourth Joint Session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects.

X. Other business

The Chair informed the Bureau about her participation in the Eco-innovation for Air Quality forum in Bulgaria, an event organized by the Bulgarian presidency on 5-6 February 2018 in Sofia. The forum gathered about 500 participants and discussed innovative solutions for air quality, different apps to monitor air quality, etc. Her participation was important in showing the cooperation between the EU and the Convention.

The secretariat reminded the Bureau members about the recent urgent request from the secretariat of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) to provide comments on the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA) reporting template prior to its discussion by the CEP Bureau.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects recalled that the Group had helped the European Commission with the ecosystem monitoring guidelines. She conveyed the readiness of the Working Group on Effects to provide support to the EU in the future with analysing the data which will be collected by the EEA and assessing the impacts all over Europe. She stressed the long-standing experience of the Working Group on Effects with monitoring issues and reiterated its willingness to strengthen the cooperation with the EU.

The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review referred to the Global Methane Forum on 16-20 April 2018 in Canada where the UNECE Executive Secretary will participate. She will further liaise with the secretariat to work on possible messages from the air quality side.