



PRTR Protocol
6th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (WGP 6)
(Geneva, 9 November 2018)

- Agreed contributions by the EU and its Member States

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda

Good morning everyone, I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Since this is our first intervention at this meeting, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Secretariat for their excellent preparatory work, including the timely submission of comprehensive background documents. Our thanks also to the Chair for her introductory statement and inviting the WGP to adopt the agenda. I would like to add that the EU and its Member States can accept the proposed agenda as it stands.

We are looking forward to a fruitful, inspiring and efficient meeting.

Agenda item 2: Status of ratification of the Protocol

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the information on the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Protocol. We welcome Montenegro¹ as a new Party to the Protocol.

The Protocol has been ratified by most UNECE member countries. We encourage the remaining Signatories to the Protocol and other interested States to ratify the Protocol in the near future to become Parties to the Protocol.

¹ Ratification 11 October 2017.

Agenda item 4: Promotion and capacity-building

The EU and its Member States would like to thank all relevant stakeholders, especially the Bureau and the Secretariat for their efforts in promoting and implementing the Protocol.

(a) Coordination mechanisms and synergies

The EU and its Member States believe that synergies with other organizations and parties are important. Identifying synergies in implementing MEA's in other fields with the help of PRTR's should be regarded as highly important.

In this respect we continue to support PRTR related coordination activities carried out in particular with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and other organizations such as REC. These cooperations open up new perspectives and are helpful in defining areas for improvement as well as for further development of PRTRs.

(b) Subregional and national activities

[We would like to take the opportunity to thank xx for its/their report/s on promoting the Protocol.]

(c) Global promotion of the Protocol

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the ECE, OECD and UNITAR as well as UNEP for their efforts that made the third joint Global Round Table on Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers a success. I would like to stress that we very much appreciate the organisation and format of the Third Global Round Table on PRTR's and we are convinced that the outcomes will serve as valuable input for further developing PRTR's.

In this context we would like to take the opportunity to welcome the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean which was adopted on 4 March 2018 in Escazú, Costa Rica, and which also includes an Article on the establishment of PRTRs².

Agenda item 5: Compliance and reporting mechanisms

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Compliance Committee for its continuous support in implementing the PRTR Protocol and especially for being prepared to support the Bureau in the possible review of Annexes I and II to the Protocol and in identifying gaps in the other provisions of the Protocol. We will comment on this under agenda item 6.

² Article 6 paragraph 4.

Agenda item 6: Development of the Protocol

First of all I would like – in the name of the EU and its Member States – to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for preparing the documents on “Progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015-2020” and on the “Development of the Protocol on PRTRs”.

We are well aware that pursuant to Article 6 paragraph 2 of the Protocol and the strategic plan for 2015–2020 steps should be taken to start an in depth process for identifying challenges and opportunities for development of the Protocol. The EU and its Member States consider that such a process should build on the existing legal situation in ECE states and also take into account the possible additional financial and administrative burdens for the Parties. For example an analysis of the data contained in the PRTRs of different Parties would be helpful.

In the document “Progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015-2020” (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/5) paragraph 15 mentions a list of challenges and related opportunities. The EU and its Member States are of the opinion that this list could be valuable tool, if it is intended to be a list of good examples in order to help to implement the strategic plan. As for paragraph 17 it has to be noted that it seems more important to focus on developing further ways to guarantee a proper transfer of information than promoting the use of a universal software solely.

In the document on “Development of the Protocol on PRTR’s” (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/6), paragraph 12 three actions are proposed, namely relating to draft amendments to Annexes I and II; the establishment of a dedicated task force on possible amendments of other provisions of the Protocol at MOPP4; and possible preparatory work by the Bureau and Compliance Committee to identify gaps as a basis for amendments of other provisions.

Whilst the EU and its Member States are not currently in a position to support amendments of the Protocol or its annexes, we could support a decision of the WGP that implements Article 6(2) of the Protocol. The aim would be to prepare a report to be submitted by the WGP to the next Meeting of the Parties allowing it to review the reporting requirements under the protocol as referred to in Article 6(2) taking into account possible ideas regarding more exhaustive lists of substances etc. and recent developments in relevant international processes. Should the MOP deem this necessary, it may then consider the launching of a formal negotiation process to address any identified issues through amending the annexes or the articles of the Protocol.

The wording of such decision of the WGP would be:

With a view to preparing a report from the WGP to the MOP, the WGP requests the Bureau, with the support of the Compliance Committee:

- a) to draw up a draft report:
 - a. reviewing the reporting requirements under the Protocol as referred to in Article 6(2) of the Protocol, including possible ideas regarding more exhaustive lists of substances etc., taking into account recent developments in relevant international processes;

- b. identifying possible gaps and examples of imprecise wording or other provisions of the Protocol, for which Parties face implementation challenges.
- b) to submit an interim report to the WGP at its next meeting.

Agenda item 7: Implementation of the work programmes for 2015-2017 and 2018-2021, including financial matters

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the report on the implementation of the work programmes for 2015-2017 and 2018-2021. We also thank the Secretariat for its efforts with the survey on progress in implementation of the strategic plan for 2015-2020.

[if brought up: At this stage, we can only support a financial scheme with voluntary contributions. As we stated at MoPP3 in Budva we remain open to re-assess the situation in future MoPPs and in light of new developments and ideas.]