

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Sixth meeting

Geneva, 9 November 2018

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹ as adopted by the Working Group at its sixth meeting

Item 1. Adoption of agenda

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the Chair;
- ii) adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/1.

Item 2. Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs;
- ii) welcomed ratification of the Protocol by Montenegro;
- iii) encouraged signatories and other interested States to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

Item 3. Designation of National Focal Points

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of nominations of National Focal Points;
- ii) called upon those Parties, which have not nominated a focal point to date, namely, Finland, Malta and the Republic of Moldova, to proceed with the nomination without any delay.

Item 4. Promotion and capacity-building

(a) Coordination mechanisms and synergies

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the Chair and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR);

¹ This document was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the document will be incorporated in the report of the meeting.

ii) expressed its appreciation to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNITAR for support provided to furthering implementation of PRTRs systems thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol;

iii) called upon relevant partner organisations and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to cooperate closely where possible to create synergies to further the implementation of the projects related to PRTRs;

iv) reiterated its call upon governments to strengthen cooperation between experts dealing with the PRTR Protocol and those dealing with the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), UNEP Conventions on Chemicals (BRS Conventions and the Minamata Convention on Mercury), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant agreements and programmes, as well as those involved in projects carried out by international organisations as to ensure coordination at national level;

v) called on Parties, other interested countries and organizations to promote PRTRs as a reporting tool for MEAs dealing with chemicals, climate matters and for other relevant MEAs, including at meetings of their respective governing bodies;

vi) reiterated its call upon Parties and stakeholders to consider implementation of the Protocol and Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in synergy.

(b) Subregional and national activities

The Working Group:

i) took note of the information provided by delegations;

ii) welcomed efforts by countries and organizations to promote establishment of PRTR systems and steps taken towards accession to the Protocol.

(c) Global promotion of the Protocol

The Working Group:

i) welcomed the joint efforts of UNECE and OECD in organising the Global Round Table and their cooperation with UNEP and UNITAR;

ii) took note of the outcomes of the third joint Global round table on PRTRs and requested the secretariat to prepare, in cooperation with OECD, a formal report on the Global Round table in three UNECE languages for its submission to the Working Group's next meeting;

iii) mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to explore an opportunity for organising a fourth global event in the future;

iv) congratulated countries and civil society from Latin American and the Caribbean and ECLAC on the adoption of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazu Agreement) and welcomed inclusion of PRTR issue in the Agreement;

v) called upon Parties, other interested States and organisations to continue global promotion of the Protocol;

vi) encouraged Parties to promote the Protocol at the upcoming Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region (21-22 March 2019, Geneva) and in other processes related to sustainable development matter.

Item 5: Compliance and reporting mechanisms

The Working Group urged Slovenia and Malta to submit their national implementation reports for the 2017 reporting cycle without any delay.

Item 6. Development of the Protocol

i) The Working Group took note of the documents: Progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/5) and the Development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/6).

ii) With a view to preparing for the next session of the Meeting of the Parties, the Working Group requested the Bureau:

a) in consideration of further development of the Protocol to draw up a report with the support of the Compliance Committee:

(i) reviewing the reporting requirements under the Protocol as referred to in Article 6(2) of the Protocol, including possible revisions of Annexes I and II taking into account recent developments in relevant international processes;

(ii) identifying possible gaps and examples of imprecise wording or other provisions of the Protocol, for which Parties face implementation challenges.

b) to submit this report to the WGP at its next meeting for consideration and as a basis for discussions on possible revisions of the Protocol.

iii) The Working Group requested EU to inform the Bureau prior to March 2019 about procedural steps that EU plans to take in order to obtain the required mandate for negotiating possible amendments to the Protocol.

Item 7. Implementation of the work programmes for 2015–2017 and 2018–2021, including financial matters

The Working Group:

i) took note of the Report on implementation of the work programmes of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2015–2017 and 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/3);

ii) took note of the Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programmes of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2015–2017 and 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2018/4) as well as information on contributions received between 23 July 2018 – 22 October 2018 (PRTR/WG.1/2018/Inf.4);

iii) took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the financial resource situation of the secretariat;

iv) took note of the information provided by delegations;

v) expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding;

vi) expressed its concern with regard to low number of pledges;

vii) urged Parties to strive not to earmark large contributions for specific purpose as to facilitate the management of funds for implementation of the work programme in a balanced way.

Item 8. Preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

The Working Group:

i) Took note of the information provided by the secretariat regarding the related outcomes of the 22nd meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 19–21 June 2018);

ii) Took note of possible dates for the fourth session to be held towards the end of June 2021;

iii) Called on interested Parties to inform the secretariat by January 2019 about their potential interest in hosting the event, also taking into consideration that the fourth session would be organized back to back with the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, and mandated the secretariat to liaise with potentially interested Parties on the matter;

iv) Mandated the Bureau to take the decision on the hosting and timing prior to the next meeting of the Working Group, as appropriate, and to report to the Working Group on the topic at its next meeting.

Item 9. Calendar of meetings

The Working Group took note of the tentative schedule of the following relevant meetings planned for 2019: next meeting of the Working Group of the Parties is planned for 28-29 November 2019; the Compliance Committee and the Bureau would meet in April and May 2019 respectively.

Item 10. Other business

No issues were discussed

Item 11. Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting, as contained in this document (PRTR/WG.1/2018/Inf.5), and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.
