

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Working Group of the Parties

Twenty-fourth meeting

Geneva, 1–3 July 2020 (online) and 28-29 October 2020 (hybrid)

Item 7: Preparations for the seventh session of the
Meeting of the Parties to the Convention

Note on the indicative preparatory timeline for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

prepared by the secretariat¹

This document outlines an indicative preparatory timeline for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs and their associated meetings are planned to be held back-to-back in Geneva on 17-22 October 2021 respectively. The timeline is prepared on the basis of a similar note drafted for the previous sessions of the Meetings of the Parties.

Activity	Tentative deadline
I. Preparation and submission of Aarhus Convention National Implementation Reports and Protocol on PRTRs National Implementation Reports	1 February 2021 (recommended)
II. Launch of the UNECE web-pages dedicated to the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (AC MoP-7) and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (PRTRs MoPP-4) respectively, containing information on online registration	March-April 2021

¹ This document was not formally edited.

Activity	Tentative deadline
III. Launch of a host-country website on practical arrangements for AC MoP-7 and PRTRs MoPP-4, which will be linked to the relevant UNECE AC MoP-7 and PRTRs MoPP-4 web-pages	March-April 2021
IV. Mailing of invitation letters by UNECE and opening of online registration	April-May 2021
V. Registration	
(a) for delegates from non-governmental organizations (NGOs):	
Online registration and submission of the requests for financial support	1 June 2021
Submission of registrations to the European ECO-Forum by the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs secretariat	10 June 2021
Submission of a proposal from the European ECO-Forum to the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs secretariat on the composition of NGOs delegation and on provision of financial support to NGOs	25 June 2021
(b) for other delegates eligible to apply for financial support:	
Submission of official nomination letters for delegations together with online registration and requests for financial support to the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs secretariat	10 June 2021
(c) for all other delegates:	
Submission of official nomination letters for delegations and online registration	25 June 2021
VI. Submission of credentials to the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs secretariat	To facilitate the procedure of verification of credentials, Parties to the Convention and to the Protocol are invited to submit the credentials of delegates or a copy of the credentials to the secretariat before 16 August 2021. Those Parties that submitted a copy of the credentials should present their originals to the secretariat before AC MOP-7 and PRTRs MoPP-4, on arrival at the meeting. It is strongly recommended that originals of the credentials should be submitted to the secretariat as soon as possible but no later than three hours before the opening of AC MoP-7 and PRTRs MoPP-4 respectively.

Activity	Tentative deadline
VII. Nominations for the Compliance Committee under - the Aarhus Convention ² - the Protocol on PRTRs ³	
A. Submission of nominations for the Compliance Committee (to the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs secretariat) ⁴ - By Parties, Signatories and NGOs (in the fields of the Convention/Protocol) - In one of the official languages (English, French or Russian) - Including the curriculum vitae (not exceeding 600 words) and any supporting material	No later than 12 weeks before the opening of the opening of the MOP, i.e. for the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, before 26 July 2021, and for the PRTR Compliance Committee before 29 July 2021.
B. Dissemination of nominations for the Compliance Committee (by the Aarhus Convention and Protocol secretariat) ⁵	No later than 6 weeks before the opening of the MOP, i.e. for the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee, before 6 September 2021, and for the PRTR Compliance Committee before 9 September 2021.

² See document ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/9 on membership to the Compliance Committee under the Aarhus Convention available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twenty-fourth-meeting-working-group-parties-aarhus-convention-virtual>

³ See document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2020/3 on membership to the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on PRTRs available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/eighth-meeting-working-group-parties-protocol-prtrs>

⁴ Nominations for the Committees should be sent to the secretariat in at least one of the official languages of the Convention/Protocol no later than 12 weeks before the opening of the MOPs. See paragraph 5 (a) of the annex to Decision I/7 (Review of Compliance) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.8) and paragraph 5 (a) of the annex to Decision I/2 (Review of Compliance) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add/1).

⁵ The secretariat should distribute the nominations (including the curricula vitae) for the Committees at least six weeks before the opening of MOPs. See paragraph 5 (c) of the annex to Decision I/7 (Review of Compliance) in conjunction with rule 10 of the annex to Decision I/1 (Rules of Procedure) (ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.2) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention; as well as paragraph 5 (c) of the annex to Decision I/2 in conjunction with rule 10 of the annex to Decision I/1 (Rules of Procedure) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

VIII. Official Documents⁶

A. For AC MoP-7

(i) Table 1⁷

Decisions on compliance (indicative timing)

Timing	Follow up to MOP-6 decisions and MOP6 requests on compliance	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned <u>accepted</u> the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned <u>did not accept</u> the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted shortly before MOP-7
01.10.2020	Final progress reports are submitted by Parties concerned on MOP-6 decisions and MOP6 requests on compliance.	Final progress reports are submitted by Parties on progress made to implement the Committee's recommendations		
01.11.2020 ⁸	Deadline for comments from communicants and observers on final progress reports submitted by Parties concerned.	Deadline for comments from communicants and observers on final progress reports submitted by Parties concerned.		
18.04.2021				Deadlines for adoption by the Compliance Committee of findings to be considered at MOP-7 (<i>6 months before MOP-7 at the request of EU and its MS</i>)

⁶ Please note that documents prepared in advance for AC MoP-7 and PRTRs MoPP-4 are divided into the following categories:

Category I (official documents for possible action, for instance agenda and decisions);

Category II (official background documents, for instance synthesis report);

Category III (other documents relevant to the agenda, for instance national implementation reports).

⁷ Table 1 contains information about decisions on compliance matter. Note that all dates related to the deliverables by the Committee are subject to the actual work of the Committee and its confirmation. Due to the following constraints it will be rather unrealistic for the Bureau to prepare and for the secretariat to finalise for editing and translation draft decisions on compliance matter if MOP-7 takes place in June 2021: recent requests of the European Union and its Member States to comment final draft progress reports and adopt all new findings six months before the MOP, combined with the deadline of 1 October 2020 by which Parties should submit the final progress reports on implementing the MOP-6 decisions.

⁸ This is an indicative deadline. The actual deadline will depend on the date that the Party concerned submits its final progress report, as it is the Committee's standard practice to give other Parties, communicants and observers four weeks to comment on each Party's final progress report.

Timing	Follow up to MOP-6 decisions and MOP6 requests on compliance	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned accepted the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned did not accept the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted shortly before MOP-7
18.04.2021			Resulting draft decisions on compliance start to be prepared by the Bureau	Resulting draft decisions on compliance start to be prepared by the Bureau
01.05.2021 – 30.06.2021	Committee adopts its reports to MOP-7 on MOP-6 decisions and requests (timing depends on nature of comments received from Parties, communicants and observers on draft reports)	Committee adopts its reports to MOP-7 on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned accepted the Committee making recommendations directly (timing depends on nature of comments received from Parties, communicants and observers on draft reports)		
01.05.2021 – 30.06.2021	Resulting draft decisions on compliance start to be prepared by the Bureau	Resulting draft decisions on compliance start to be prepared by the Bureau		
01.07.2021- 01.08.2021	Draft decision on general issues of compliance starts to be prepared by the Bureau			
26.07.2021	Committee adopts its general report to MOP-7 (12 weeks before MOP, annex to decision I/7, para. 35)			
	Finalisation of draft decisions by the secretariat for submission to the editing, translation and processing by the Documents Management Service of United Nations Office at Geneva (to be released in 3 languages in approx. 1 month)			
Preparatory and General Segments at MOP-7, 18.10.2021-20.10.2021	Discussion on and approval of draft decisions			

Timing	Follow up to MOP-6 decisions and MOP6 requests on compliance	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned accepted the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted since MOP-6 regarding which the Party concerned did not accept the Committee making recommendations directly under para. 36(b) of the annex to decision I/7	Decisions based on findings of non-compliance adopted shortly before MOP-7
HLS of MOP-7, 21.10.2021	Adoption of draft decisions and endorsement of findings of the Compliance Committee			

(ii) Table 2⁹

Other decisions, agenda and declaration

Timing	Decision on Strategic Plan	Decisions on WP, FA, AI, PP, AJ, PPIF; Declaration; MOP-7 Agenda
February-early March 2019, meeting of the Bureau and, as needed, email consultations of the Bureau	Initial draft proposal on the new Strategic Plan is considered by the Bureau and submitted to Working Group	
26-28 June 2019, 23 rd meeting of the Working Group of the Parties	Draft proposal on the Strategic Plan to be considered by the Working Group of the Parties	
July-September 2019, email consultations of the Bureau, as needed	The revised draft Strategic Plan to be considered by the Bureau	
October-December 2019	Upon the revision by the Bureau, the next draft Strategic Plan to be distributed to national focal points and stakeholders for comments	
February-October 2020, meeting of the Bureau/email consultations of the Bureau, as needed	The revised draft Strategic Plan to be considered by the Bureau and submitted to Working Group	Notes by the PPIF and TFs Chairs; draft outline for MOP-7 agenda with possible elements for Declaration; draft elements for future decisions on work programme and on financial arrangements are considered by the Bureau and submitted to Working Group. Draft declaration is prepared by the Bureau and distributed to national focal points and stakeholders for comments. Preparation of the draft declaration will be coordinated with the Protocol's Bureau.

⁹ Table 2 contains information about MOP agenda, other decisions and a declaration. The Bureau considered and agreed on the below preparatory timeline at its forty-third meeting (Geneva, 26 February 2019) and, considering the above-mentioned reasons, recommended to the Working Group to hold the seventh session in late September/early October 2021.

Timing	Decision on Strategic Plan	Decisions on WP, FA, AI, PP, AJ, PPIF; Declaration; MOP-7 Agenda
24 th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (July and October 2020)	The revised draft Strategic Plan to be considered and, possibly, approved by the Working Group of the Parties. If need be, the draft Strategic Plan might be revised by the Bureau after the meeting of the Working Group and distributed again for comments to Parties and stakeholders prior to the 25 th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties with the view of its approval by the Working Group at that meeting.	Notes by the PPIF and TFs Chairs; draft outline for MOP-7 agenda and draft elements for the future decisions on work programme and on financial arrangements are considered by the Working Group. The Working Group provides its initial feedback on draft declaration prepared by the Bureaux.
November 2020, meeting of the Bureau/email consultations of the Bureau, as needed		Preparation and revision of draft decisions and of draft declaration by the Bureau as appropriate. Preparation of the draft declaration will be coordinated with the Protocol's Bureau.
November-December 2020		Upon the revision by the Bureau, drafts of the documents to be distributed to national focal points and stakeholders for comments.
December 2020/early 2021, meeting of the Bureau and, as needed, email consultations of the Bureau		The draft decisions and draft declaration, revised as needed, are considered by the Bureau and submitted to the Working Group for its 25 th meeting.
25 th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, planned for Spring 2021 (dates tbc)		Discussion on and approval of draft decisions and of provisional MOP-7 agenda; discussion on and provisional approval of draft Declaration.
April-May 2021	Finalization of documents by the secretariat for submission for the editing, translation and processing by the Documents Management Service of United Nations Office at Geneva <i>Documents will be uploaded online as soon as they become available.</i>	
Preparatory Segment at MOP-7, dates tbc	Discussion on and approval of draft Declaration (<i>draft decisions are to be approved by the Working Group at its 25th meeting</i>)	
General/HLS of MOP-7	Adoption of draft decisions and draft Declaration	

B. For Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4

Activity	Tentative deadline
Initial discussion on future draft decisions, on elements for draft Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4 agenda and for a possible draft Declaration	7 th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, 28-29 November 2019
Pursuant to the outcomes of the discussions by the Working Group of the Parties, the Bureau prepares draft decisions, draft elements for a possible Declaration and draft provisional Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4 agenda, to be distributed to national focal points and stakeholders for comments. Preparation of the draft declaration will be coordinated with the Convention's Bureau.	June-December 2020
Discussion on and approval, as appropriate, of draft decisions and of provisional Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4 agenda; discussion on possible draft Declaration	8 th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, 16-18 December 2020
Finalization of the provisional Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4 agenda and other official documents by the secretariat for submission to the editing and processing by the Documents Management Service of United Nations Office at Geneva <i>Documents will be uploaded online as soon as they become available.</i>	February-April 2021
Discussion on and approval, as required, of any possible remaining draft decisions and of the draft Declaration and the adoption of documents.	Protocol on PRTRs MoPP-4 and joint High-level Segment