



## **International PRTR Coordinating Group**

### **Twelfth meeting**

Tuesday, 15 October 2019, Paris, France

## **REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

1. The meeting of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group (ICG) was attended by representatives of the following countries and organizations: Canada, Chile, Czechia, European Union, France, Japan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Iñigo de Vicente-Mingarro (Spain), and serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

### **I. Opening and adoption of the agenda**

2. The Chair opened the meeting with an introduction to the work of ICG and presented the provisional agenda.<sup>2</sup> The agenda was then adopted by the participants.

### **II. PRTR activities**

#### **A. PRTR-global-map, including its update**

3. The Chair presented the current version of the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers-global-map<sup>3</sup> and invited the ICG participants and other stakeholders to provide the secretariat with possible up-dates to the map.

#### **B. *Tour de Table* on ongoing and planned PRTR support activities and services**

4. Participants shared information on planned and existing Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR)-related activities, which covered the following subjects, e.g.:

- PRTR and climate change;

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/intlcgimages/about.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://prtr.unece.org/prtr-global-map>.

- Making data more accessible for public through establishing partnerships between authorities, universities and industry, with the overall aim to make PRTRs more user-friendly;
- Developing different types of search tools and data output, including diagrams, reports and videos on specific topics of interest;
- Identifying ways to increase the use of PRTR data by journalists and other media workers and for informed decision-making processes;
- Adapting PRTR systems for different national and international reporting obligations, including the related latest changes in the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register;
- Improving the data collection- and data quality- related components of PRTR-systems;
- Up-dating historical data;
- Reviewing existing PRTR systems, including a pilot study by the Nordic PRTR Group on evaluation of reporting thresholds, and reviewing “old” regulations;
- Providing support to individual countries, including Argentina, Brazil, China, Columbia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Peru, Ruanda, Turkey and Vietnam.

### **C. Existing online PRTR-related websites under the auspices of ECE, OECD and UNITAR**

5. Participants considered the issue of how to improve leverage of the existing online sources of information related to PRTR, including PRTR.net,<sup>4</sup> the OECD resource centre,<sup>5</sup> the OECD Centre for PRTR data,<sup>6</sup> the UNITAR and IOMC platforms,<sup>7</sup> on the basis of a note prepared by the Chair.<sup>8</sup> Participants provided their comments on the topic and agreed that it will be useful to strengthen one central website, such as PRTR.net, which would provide an overview on PRTR-related work and topics and serve also as an entry point for more specific enquiry on PRTR-related topics. From this central website users could be directed to different websites with more specific content. Participants were invited to provide written comments on the note after the meeting which would then be taken into account when finalizing the document in view of presenting it at the next meeting of ICG.

## **III. PRTR HOT-TOPICS**

### **A. Good practices for a successful PRTR awareness raising campaign and interactive data visualization options for communicating/presenting PRTR information**

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<sup>4</sup> Available at <https://prtr.unece.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.prtr-rc.fi](http://www.prtr-rc.fi).

<sup>6</sup> Available at [http://www.oecd.org/env\\_prtr\\_data/](http://www.oecd.org/env_prtr_data/).

<sup>7</sup> Available at <http://prtr.unitar.org/site/home> and <https://iomctoolbox.oecd.org>, respectively.

<sup>8</sup> Available under the tab “presentations” at <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=50979>.

6. The participants underlined the continuing importance of the above topics. A representative of the United States of America presented the country's recent work on:

(a) Analysis of how users make use of the inventories website, including on how content is perceived by users and whether users were able to find all available content on a webpage;

(b) Risk evaluation based on the Toxic Release Inventory<sup>9</sup> and the "use" information for substances it provides;

(c) Addressing misconception of what inventory data includes, e.g. through in-house capacity-building of staff, printable factsheets for community use and appropriate data interpretation for media.

#### **B. Scope of PRTRs in the context of new developments with regard to use of chemical substances and further harmonization of different PRTR systems**

7. The Chair recalled that the above subjects, as well as subjects referred to in section A above, were identified at the Group's previous meeting as those requiring continuing discussion as to allow sharing any new relevant developments. The Chair then shared the Spanish examples for lists of equivalence between substances and activities under different regulations. In the ensuing discussion participants noted that such lists were useful for all stages of PRTR development and, in particular, during the early stages of establishing a new PRTR. Such lists could be made available on e.g. PRTR.net and, if possible, in multiple languages.

### **IV. Promotion of the work of ICG**

8. The Chair introduced the item by inviting participants to share their views on the following issues:

(a) How to ensure that all major international PRTR-related activities and actors are covered and involved in the work of ICG; and

(b) Whether ICG should focus its work more on promoting PRTRs and reach out to e.g. those countries that are marked "grey" on the PRTR-global-map (with no information on PRTR related activities available) and/or to international financial institutions to explore their interest in sponsoring PRTR-related activities.

9. UNITAR noted that countries and organizations currently participating in the ICG should reach out more actively to those countries and donors which are not involved the work of ICG as to promote better global coordination and the advancement of PRTRs in different regions. Also, the information gathered for the PRTR-global-map could be a good basis for helping to identify countries which are considering to implement PRTRs and therefore could be invited to future meetings of the Group for e.g. sharing relevant experience and participating in possible future capacity building activities. In addition, it would be useful to contact National Focal Points to the "SAICM beyond 2020" process to ensure that PRTRs are considered properly at the global level also in connection with sound chemical management.

### **V. Election of the Chair**

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<sup>9</sup> Available at <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program>.

11. The secretariat reported that no new candidatures for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the ICG were submitted. The current Chair and Vice Chair were unanimously re-elected in accordance with paragraph 11 of the terms of reference of ICG.

## **VI. Next meeting**

12. The secretariat informed participants that the next meeting of ICG would be organized considering preparations for the third meeting of the Working Group on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers under OECD to take place in January 2021.

## **VII. Outcomes**

13. The participants reiterated their commitment to coordination and synergies in relation to the work on PRTRs. They furthermore decided that at the upcoming meetings participants shall continue discussion on the following topics:

- a) The scope of PRTRs in the context of new developments with regard to use of chemical substances and further harmonization of different PRTR systems and issues of data equivalence;
- b) Good practices for a successful PRTR awareness raising campaign and interactive, data visualization options for communicating/presenting PRTR information.

14. On the issue of how to improve leverage of the existing online PRTR-related websites under the auspices of ECE, OECD and UNITAR, it was agreed that the participants would provide the secretariat with their possible comments on the note prepared by the Chair and circulated among the participants with a view to finalize the document for the Group's next meeting.

15. Furthermore, participants were invited to provide the secretariat with contacts of their major partners involved in PRTR-related activities in order to ensure that information on the Group's activities was shared with them.

16. Finally, noting that the last revision of the terms of reference of the ICG<sup>10</sup> was many years ago, participants agreed to send their possible comments on the document prior to the next meeting of ICG with the view of their possible reconsideration.

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<sup>10</sup> Available at  
[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/prtr/Intl\\_PRTR\\_CG/Documents/PRTRCG\\_2009\\_IV\\_4.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/prtr/Intl_PRTR_CG/Documents/PRTRCG_2009_IV_4.pdf).