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

Fortieth session

Geneva, 18 December 2020

Report of the Executive Body on its fortieth session

I. Introduction

1. The fortieth session of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was held on 18 December 2020 in Geneva in a hybrid format.

A. Attendance

2. The session was attended by representatives of the following Parties to the Convention: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

3. A representative of the World Meteorological Organization participated in the session. Also present at the meeting were representatives from non-governmental organizations and academic institutions, including: the European Environmental Bureau; the European Federation of Clean Air and Environmental Protection Associations; NOVA University Lisbon; and the University of Coimbra (Portugal).

B. Organizational matters

4. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden).

5. The Executive Body adopted the agenda for its fortieth session, as set out in document ECE/EB.AIR/145.¹

6. The Executive Body adopted the report of its thirty-ninth session (Geneva, 9–13 December 2019) contained in documents ECE/EB.AIR/144, Add.1, Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2.

¹ All documentation for the meeting is available on the web page for the session:
<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/executive-body-fortieth-session>.

II. Report on credentials

7. Delegations were invited to submit their credentials in advance of the session. The officers of the session reported that 33 Parties to the Convention, which constituted a quorum, had submitted credentials. The secretariat noted that credentials were received from 2 other Parties, which increased the number of Parties present with credentials to 35. The Executive Body took note of the report on credentials.

III. Review of implementation of the 2020–2021 workplan

8. The subsidiary bodies and the secretariat reported on the implementation of the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.2).

A. Science

9. The Executive Body took note of the report of the sixth joint session of the Steering Body to the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe and the Working Group on Effects (ECE/EB.AIR/GE.1/2020/2–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2020/2).

B. Policy

10. The Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review reported on the outcomes of the fifty-eighth session of the Working Group (Geneva, 14, 15 and 17 December 2020). She highlighted in particular the recommendations made by the Working Group with respect to the review of the Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol) (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/124, forthcoming) and the draft guidance document on integrated sustainable nitrogen management (ECE/EB.AIR/2020/6–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2020/5), taking note of the progress of work by the task forces, and discussions on hemispheric transport and reporting of the condensable part in emissions of particulate matter.

11. The Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review;

(b) Adopted decision 2020/1 on adoption of the Guidance document on integrated sustainable nitrogen management (see annex I below);

(c) Adopted the revised list of official documents for the sessions of the Executive Body and the main subsidiary bodies in 2021 (see annex III below);

(d) Requested the secretariat to issue as publications the report for policymakers on the costs of controls versus the costs of inaction and the guidance document on reduction of emissions from agricultural residue burning, being prepared under, respectively, items 2.1.7 and 2.2.2 of the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.2) following their submission with a view to adoption at its session in December 2021.

C. Compliance

12. The Executive Body took note of the twenty-third report of the Implementation Committee (ECE/EB.AIR/2020/2).

13. With respect to the election of members of the Implementation Committee, a representative of France underscored the commitment of France to the Convention and its proper functioning. She informed the Executive Body that France had withdrawn its nomination for the Committee membership in the interest of the election process. She

nevertheless expressed her regret at the lack of transparency in the process of submission of nominations and the elections. The Executive Body took note of that information.

14. The Executive Body:

(a) Elected Canada (Ms. Catherine Bloodworth) and Estonia (Mr. Marek Maasikmets) for a first term on the Implementation Committee;

(b) Re-elected Austria (Mr. Manfred Ritter) and Norway (Ms. Alice Gaustad) for a fifth term; Belgium (Ms. Wendy Altobello), Croatia (Ms. Kristina Tekić), Serbia (Mr. Nebojsa Redzic), Spain (Ms. María José Alonso Moya) and Sweden (Ms. Petra Hagström) for a third term on the Implementation Committee;

(c) Elected Mr. Ritter (Austria) as Chair of the Implementation Committee.

D. Capacity-building to promote ratification and implementation in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

15. The Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the report of the Chair of the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia Coordinating Group on the activities of the Group in 2020 (informal document No. 3);

(b) Also took note of the secretariat's report on capacity-building and awareness-raising to promote ratification and implementation (informal document No. 4);

(c) Thanked Parties supporting the capacity-building activities;

(d) Requested Parties to continue to support financially the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities managed by the secretariat.

16. A representative of Turkey noted that Turkey had not been involved in capacity-building activities in 2020 under the Convention, although the Party was mentioned in the respective part of the workplan. She stressed the need for support for Turkey in strengthening the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. The Executive Body took note of that information.

E. Communication and outreach

17. The Executive Body took note of the progress report by the secretariat on communication and outreach activities (informal document No. 5).

18. The representative of the European Union expressed regret that little progress had been reported on the forum for international cooperation on air pollution and called on the secretariat to support further steps by the Executive Body Bureau and the Parties in implementing decision 2019/5 (ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.1). The Executive Body took note of that information.

IV. Review of sufficiency and effectiveness of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone

19. The Executive Body:

(a) Adopted decision 2020/2 on the plan for undertaking the review of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, pursuant to its article 10 (see annex II below);

(b) Decided to add the following item to the 2020–2021 workplan for the Implementation of the Convention:

<i>Work plan item</i>	<i>Activity description/objective</i>	<i>Expected outcome/deliverable</i>	<i>Lead body(ies)</i>	<i>Resource requirements and/or funding source</i>
1.1.5	Carry out tasks to support the review of the Gothenburg Protocol	Input provided to support the review of the Gothenburg Protocol	All task forces, centres and ICPS under EMEP SB and WGE, in line with the review work programme	Within existing resources; or supplemented by voluntary additional in-kind/cash contributions from Parties

V. Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention

20. The Executive Body took note of the financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/2020/1).

21. With respect to the Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP Protocol), the Executive Body:

(a) Decided on the detailed use of resources in 2021 as set out in table 2 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2020/1;

(b) Agreed on the schedule of mandatory contributions from Parties for 2021 and provisionally agreed on those for 2022 as set out in table 3 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2020/1;

(c) Supported the Steering Body's call on the Parties to the EMEP Protocol to consider making additional voluntary contributions (in kind or in cash through the trust fund) to ensure that the work in 2021 could be accomplished as foreseen in the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention;

(d) Requested the Steering Body, with the assistance of its Bureau, to present the details of the 2022 budget for approval by the Executive Body at its forty-first session (Geneva, 6–10 December 2021);

(e) Urged Parties that had not yet done so to pay their 2020 contributions in cash to the trust fund and, in 2021, to pay their contributions so that they reached the trust fund in the first half of the year;

(f) Urged Parties in arrears to pay them in full to the trust fund.

22. With respect to the core activities not covered by the EMEP Protocol, the Executive Body:

(a) Took note of the contributions made to the trust fund for effects-oriented activities for 2020, and welcomed the payments made, but also expressed disappointment at the lack of response by many Parties;

(b) Urged all Parties that had not yet done so to consider providing the recommended contributions to the trust fund for financing core activities without undue delay;

(c) Decided that the essential international coordination costs for financing the core activities of the Convention and its Protocols, other than those covered by the EMEP Protocol, would be \$2,358,700 in 2021, and would provisionally be \$2,358,700 in 2022 and \$2,358,700 in 2023;

(d) Agreed on the recommended schedule of contributions from Parties in 2021, and provisionally agreed on those for 2022, as set out in table 11 of document ECE/EB.AIR/2020/1;

(e) Requested the secretariat to inform Parties of the recommended contributions made to the trust fund to meet the 2021 budget, inviting them to make those contributions as agreed in revised decision 2002/1 (ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.1);

(f) Encouraged Parties to make the recommended contributions to the trust fund before 30 November each year;

(g) Noted with appreciation the essential support provided to the Convention and its bodies by lead countries, countries hosting centres and those organizing meetings, as well as countries that funded activities of their national focal centres/points and the active participation of national experts;

(h) Invited the secretariat to provide information on the amount of contributions made to the trust fund for effects-oriented activities as of 30 November 2021 at the forty-first session of the Executive Body, and to use the amount as a basis to co-fund the effects-oriented activities in 2022;

(i) Decided that, in the event that the amount of contributions was lower than the agreed costs of \$2,358,700, unearmarked contributions should be divided equally between the centres.

23. With respect to the promotion and implementation of the Convention, the Executive Body:

(a) Reiterated its support for that element of the work programme, the successful enlarged implementation of the Convention in countries in transition of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia being crucial for the future of the Convention;

(b) Invited all Parties, in particular those that led task forces and expert groups, to promote activities such as special workshops in countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and to collaborate with the secretariat in developing and carrying out such projects;

(c) Welcomed the contributions to the trust fund and thanked those countries that had contributed.

24. With respect to secretariat support, the Executive Body invited Parties to make voluntary contributions to strengthen the Convention secretariat.

VI. Election of officers

25. The secretariat recalled that, at its thirty-eighth session (Geneva, 10–14 December 2018), the Executive Body had re-elected its Chair and three Vice-Chairs in accordance with rule 17 of the rules of procedure,² and had re-elected the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in accordance with rule 21 (ECE/EB.AIR/142, paras. 73–76). It further recalled that, at its thirty-ninth session, the Executive Body had elected a replacement for a Vice-Chair of the Executive Body for the remainder of the term (ECE/EB.AIR/144, para. 59).

26. Due to the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the challenges it had caused for the Convention, with the intention of securing stability and continuity of the work of the Executive Body, the Executive Body decided, on an exceptional and one-time basis, and notwithstanding rule 17 of the rules of procedure, to defer the elections of the Chair and three Vice-Chairs of the Executive Body and the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review to the session of the Executive Body in December 2021. Accordingly, the current Chairs and Vice-Chairs would remain in their positions until elections were held in December 2021. The Executive Body encouraged all Parties to put forward nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Executive Body and Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review to the Executive Body, to be considered at the December 2021 session.

² Available at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/lrtap/Rules_of_Procedure.pdf.

27. The Executive Body recognized the challenging circumstances brought on by the pandemic and endorsed the decision by the Working Group on Strategies and Review to defer the election of its Vice-Chairs until its fifty-ninth session to ensure stability and continuity in its work.

VII. Other business

28. The representative of the European Union informed participants of the Party's intention to propose an item for discussion at the next session of the Executive Body and of an informal document submitted to provide background information on that matter.

29. A representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland suggested that an additional session of the Executive Body be held in May 2021 to consider the annotated outline of the report on the review of the Gothenburg Protocol. The Executive Body requested the Executive Body Bureau and the secretariat to explore the possibility of holding such a session.

VIII. Adoption of decisions taken at the fortieth session

30. The Executive Body adopted its decisions and agreed on the conclusions of its fortieth session.

Annex I

Decision 2020/1

Adoption of the Guidance document on integrated sustainable nitrogen management

The Executive Body,

Recalling the long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for 2020–2030 and beyond,¹

Recalling also item 2.2.3 of the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention,²

Recognizing that sustainable nitrogen management contributes to the objectives of the Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, and its 2012 amendments,

1. *Decides* to adopt the Guidance document on integrated sustainable nitrogen management contained in document ECE/EB.AIR/2020/6–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2020/5, as amended during the session;
2. *Encourages* Parties to mobilize efforts to control pollution from agricultural sources in the context of the wider nitrogen cycle and to apply the Guidance document on integrated sustainable nitrogen management as appropriate.

¹ ECE/EB.AIR/142/Add.2, decision 2018/5.

² ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.2, table 2.

Annex II

Decision 2020/2

Plan for undertaking the review of the Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, pursuant to its article 10

The Executive Body,

Acknowledging the significant work that has continued despite the challenges faced by the Convention due to the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

Recalling article 10 (2) of the Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012 (“the Gothenburg Protocol” or “the Protocol”), which indicates that Parties shall keep under review the obligations set out in the Protocol, including the adequacy of the obligations and the progress made towards the achievement of the objective of the Protocol,

Recalling also its decision 2019/4 to initiate the review of the Gothenburg Protocol,¹ and requesting the Working Group on Strategies and Review to develop a plan for the review that includes its scope and content, as well as a detailed work schedule for the review, including the procedure for undertaking it,

Noting article 10 (3) of the Protocol, which indicates that the review shall include an evaluation of mitigation measures for black carbon emissions, and article 10 (4) of the Protocol, which indicates that the review shall include an evaluation of ammonia control measures and consider the need to revise annex IX, no later than at the second session of the Executive Body after entry into force,

Noting also the informal information submitted and presented for consideration at the fifty-eighth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review related to progress on the elements of the review referred to in article 10 (3) and (4),

Welcoming document ECE/EB.AIR/2020/3–ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2020/3 entitled Preparations for the review of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012 (the preparatory document) as the plan for the review,

Emphasizing that the inclusion of any particular element in the review should not be taken to mean that this element would be included in any possible future revision of the Protocol,

1. *Decides* that the scope of the review should remain broad at this time, and that the review should focus on information-gathering, scientific and technical inputs and assessing the information collected;
2. *Requests* that the Convention’s subsidiary bodies consider the tasks contained in annex I to the Preparatory Document to be carried out to support the review of the Gothenburg Protocol and requests implicated bodies to submit to the secretariat, by 1 February 2021, timelines for completion and initial input; and that any further input from implicated bodies, in consideration of the tasks in annex I to the preparatory document, be submitted as informal documents for consideration at the fifty-ninth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review;
3. *Also requests* that the Convention’s subsidiary bodies undertake to provide and submit to the secretariat the scientific and technical inputs referred to in annex I to the preparatory

¹ ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.1.

document and take note of the amendment to the 2020–2021 workplan for the implementation of the Convention, as adopted at the fortieth session of the Executive Body;

4. *Requests* the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review to compile the inputs and information received into an annotated outline for consideration at the fifty-ninth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review; to undertake the policy-related work of the review, including assessing the policy implications of the information received; and to elaborate and prepare the report of the review, including its conclusions;

5. *Decides* that the procedure for carrying out the review is contained in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above and that the preliminary work schedule for the review is as contained in annex II to the preparatory document, subject to any modifications as a result of the timelines provided for in paragraph 2 above;

6. *Takes note of* the progress made in taking stock of mitigation measures for black carbon emissions and of ammonia control measures as described in the informal documents “Considerations for ammonia relevant to future review of the Gothenburg Protocol” and “Draft guidance document on prioritizing reductions of particulate matter so as to also achieve reduction of black carbon”,² and concludes that the evaluations required by article 10 (3) and (4) relating to black carbon emissions and ammonia control measures, including consideration of the need to revise annex IX, have been initiated;

7. *Requests* the Working Group on Strategies and Review to continue to develop the evaluations referred to in paragraph 6 above as part of the broader review process, and invites Parties to submit comments on the information in the informal documents referenced in paragraph 6 above, as well as any additional views, by 1 February 2021, and that any further input be submitted as informal documents to be taken into consideration at the fifty-ninth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review as the evaluations are further developed;

8. *Requests* that the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review provide updates on progress, along with any updates to the work schedule, to the session of the Executive Body in December 2021, and to subsequent Executive Body sessions as appropriate.

² Available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/working-group-strategies-and-review-fifty-eighth-session>.

Annex III

List of official documents for the sessions of the Executive Body and the main subsidiary bodies in 2021

Working Group on Strategies and Review (fifty-ninth session)

Agenda

Report of the Working Group on Strategies and Review on its fifty-eighth session

Report of the Task Force on Techno-economic Issues

Report of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen

Draft 2022–2023 workplan for the implementation of the Convention: policy-related aspects and elements and amendments to capture work required from Task Forces

Draft annotated outline of the report on the review of the Gothenburg Protocol

Barriers to implementation and ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol

Guidance document on reduction of emissions from agricultural residue burning

Joint Task Force on Techno-economic Issues/Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling report on the costs of inaction

Joint Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen/Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling report on ammonia

Draft guidance document on prioritizing reductions of particulate matter in its sources that are also significant sources of black carbon

EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects (seventh joint session)

Agenda

Report of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects on their seventh joint session

Joint report by the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

Measurements and modelling (report of the Chair of the Task Force on Measurements and Modelling)

Integrated assessment modelling (report of the Chair of the Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling)

Emission inventories (report of the Chair of the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections)

Present state of emission data (report of the Centre on Emission Inventories and Projections)

Hemispheric transport of air pollution (report of the Chair of the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution)

Activities of the Bureaux of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects

Review of adjustment applications

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of Acidification of Rivers and Lakes

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Effects of Air Pollution on Materials, including Historic and Cultural Monuments

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Effects of Air Pollution on Natural Vegetation and Crops

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Integrated Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Ecosystems

Technical report of the International Cooperative Programme on Modelling and Mapping of Critical Levels and Loads and Air Pollution Effects, Risks and Trends

Technical report of the Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution

Updated strategy for scientific bodies under the Convention.

Draft 2022–2023 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

Financial and budgetary matters

Executive Body (forty-first session)

Agenda

Report of the Executive Body on its forty-first session

Draft 2022–2023 workplan for the implementation of the Convention

Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention

Report of the Implementation Committee

Draft decisions of the Executive Body

Review of the Gothenburg Protocol: report on progress

Guidance on reduction of emissions from agricultural residue burning

Joint Task Force on Techno-economic Issues/Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling report on the costs of inaction

Joint Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen/Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling report on ammonia

Draft guidance document on prioritizing reductions of particulate matter in its sources that are also significant sources of black carbon
