

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

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

### **Bureau of the Executive Body**

#### **Meeting**

18 June 2021, via videoconference

## **Report of the meeting**

### **I. Attendance**

*Bureau members:* Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland), Ms. Elizabeth Nichols (United States of America), Ms. Laurence Rouil (Chair of the EMEP Steering Body), Ms. Isaura Rabago (Chair of the Working Group on Effects) and Mr. Manfred Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee)

*Observer:* Ms. Susanne Lindahl (European Union), Mr. Till Spranger (Germany)<sup>1</sup>

*Not present:* Ms. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review)

### **II. Funding of centres under the Convention**

The Director of the ECE Environment Division informed the Bureau of the stage of the consideration of cases of potential conflict of interest in a general manner.

The observer from Germany warned the Bureau of the risk to further existence of the Coordination Centre for Effects. He explained that in the absence of a framework contract with the ECE, Germany would stop financing the centre, which was largely funded by the Government of Germany. For that reason, a written confirmation by the ECE of expected contract issuance would need to be received before 30 June 2021.

The Bureau member from Switzerland noted that the Convention was relying on the good will of Parties to fund the work of the centres and to delegate officers in the Bureaux of subsidiary bodies and that he found it difficult for Parties to find fully independent institutions or persons who would be aware of the work of the Convention and air pollution related issues.

The Bureau member from the United States of America and the observer from the European Union noted the need to clearly define the boundaries for confidentiality to be applied stressing that the EB Bureau should have been kept informed by the secretariat since the beginning of the process. They deemed the potential of a Party representative to be removed from a Bureau of one of the Convention's bodies unprecedented. They expressed their concern about the impact of the situation on the

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<sup>1</sup> Attended the meeting (agenda item 1) upon invitation by the Chair

mutual trust between Parties and the ECE and on the functionality of the Convention and expressed their hope for a smooth solution.

The Bureau pointed to a clause to MoUs enabling the ECE to terminate agreements in case of a conflict of interest and requested the ECE to issue contracts with the centres before the advice by the Office of Legal Affairs was received. In case the contracts could not be issued within the following working days, a formal confirmation of the expected contracts issuance would need to be sent by the ECE to Austria and Germany.

The Director of the ECE Environment Division noted his efforts to speed up the consideration process and agreed with the Bureau members that there was an urgent need for a solution to avoid disruption in the work of the centres. He took note of the request of the Bureau and noted that further consultations would be held with the ECE Executive Office.

The Chair of the Working Group on Effects noted that the amount of the payment received by the Centre for Dynamic Modelling did not correspond to the amount indicated in the annex to the MoU and expressed hope that the mistake would be soon resolved.

### **III. Follow-up to the fifty-ninth session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review**

The secretariat informed the Bureau about the progress in providing follow-up to the fifty-ninth session of the Working Group, in particular, the preparation of the report of the session, sending a letter to national focal points with the list of inputs to be provided by delegations, and collection of information on the cost implied for the organization of additional meetings in 2022 and 2023.

With respect to the organization of meetings in the second half of 2021, the secretariat informed the Bureau of the extension of meeting slots back to 3 hours and the updated conference room capacity for in-person attendance following the release of certain restrictions in Switzerland. The secretariat noted that the information on the number of slots with interpretation available for the forty-first session of the Executive Body would be communicated to the Chair in some weeks.

The Bureau members from Switzerland and the United States of America, noting the limited participation of delegates from the EECCA countries in the last session of the Working Group and on-going renovation in the Palais des Nations, suggested that a possibility of organizing meetings in one of EECCA countries or another alternative location could be explored.

With respect to the format of the upcoming meetings, the Bureau stressed the importance of ensuring inclusiveness and avoiding inequities in Parties participation, for this reason there was a preference towards either fully presential or fully virtual meetings.

### **IV. Date and time for the next meeting**

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on 7 September 2021.

## **V. Other business**

The Bureau member from the United States of America suggested that the discussion on the resources needs for organization of meetings become a reoccurring agenda item and take place a year preceding the fiscal year when the contributions were to be made. She expressed the need for an informal document that would explain any financial or structural constraints in the secretariat and include, inter alia, information on the origins of the liquidity crisis and renovation of the Palais des Nations.

The Bureau member from Switzerland noted that the WHO might publish its new air quality guidelines on 7 September, the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. The release date would not be officially communicated by the WHO until some days before the release, but the Convention community should be ready to use it as an opportunity to promote its work.