

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

Fourth session

Geneva, 22 October 2021

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Review and adoption of decisions

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹

As adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session

**Joined High-level Segment,
21 October 2021**

Item 2: Report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties and adoption of draft operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol due to extraordinary circumstances

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. approved the report on credentials and noted that 34 Parties had submitted credentials and thus a quorum had been reached;

ii. adopted the operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol due to extraordinary circumstances as amended at the meeting(ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.2).

**General Segment,
22 October 2021**

Item 1: Opening of the general segment and adoption of the agenda

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. took note of the information provided by the Chair;

ii. adopted the provisional agenda of the session.

Item 2: Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. took note of the status of the ratification of the Protocol and welcomed accession by Kazakhstan and ratifications by Montenegro and Italy;

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. encouraged Signatories and other interested States to proceed with the accession to the Protocol as soon as possible;

iii. took note of statements by European Union and its Member States and Kazakhstan on recent and anticipated developments.

Item 3: Promotion and capacity-building

a) Coordination mechanisms and synergies

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. took note of the outcomes of the joint Global round table on PRTRs;

ii. mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to organise a fourth global event in the next intersessional period;

iii. requested the secretariat to produce the report of the future global round tables as official documents so that they would be available in the three official languages of UNECE, without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources and submit them to the Working Group of the Parties or to the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate;

iv. took note of the report by the Chair of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) Coordinating Group (ICG) and welcomes the Group's important role for contributing to a more transversal perspective of the PRTRs development;

v. took note of the information provided by partner organizations and thanks partner organisations for support provided to furthering implementation of PRTR systems thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol on PRTRs;

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

vii. mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to continue global promotion of the Protocol;

viii. requested the secretariat to continue servicing the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) Coordinating Group (ICG);

ix. reiterated its call upon governments to strengthen cooperation between national focal points and experts dealing with the Protocol on PRTRs and those dealing with the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and the UNEP chemicals conventions – namely, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for

Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Minamata Convention on Mercury – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant agreements, initiatives or programmes, as well as involved in projects carried out by international organisations as to ensure coordination at national level;

x. Reiterated its call on Parties, other interested countries and organizations to promote PRTRs as a reporting tool for MEAs dealing with chemicals and other relevant MEAs;

xi. took note of the report by the Chair on the informal coordination of representatives of the governing bodies of the ECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Committee on the Environmental Policy;

xii. reiterated its request to the secretariat and interested States to translate the text of the Protocol in other United Nations official languages and its request to the secretariat to ensure the availability of all formal documents for meetings under the Protocol in all ECE languages, without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources.

b) Subregional and national activities

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. took note of the outcomes of the relevant sections on capacity building activities of the Report of the 7th and 8th meeting of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties;

ii. welcomed the accession and ratification by several countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-Eastern Europe, and called upon those countries to demonstrate substantial progress in establishing PRTRs, and encouraged other countries in these subregions to follow their example;

iii. called upon countries and partner organizations to support capacity building activities as to advance establishing pollutant release and transfer register systems and in furthering ratification of the Protocol;

iv. requested the secretariat, OECD and UNITAR to continue working closely as to ensure the effective use of PRTR.net, PRTR-Learn and other OECD PRTR websites.

Item 4: Reporting and compliance mechanisms

a) Reporting mechanism

The Meeting of the Parties:

i. took note of information provided in national implementation reports (NIRs) submitted by Parties, and the synthesis report (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/10) on the status of implementation of the Protocol by Parties;

ii. recognized the need for timely submission of NIRs in order to ensure a good quality of the synthesis report and its timely submission for translation;

iii. noted with regret that two Parties did not submit their reports;

iv. urged Parties that did not submit their national implementation reports, Lithuania and Montenegro, to do so by latest 15 November 2021;

- v. adopted as amended draft decision IV/1 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.3);
- vi. took note of the statement by EU and its Member States.

b) Compliance mechanism

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of the report of the Chair of the Compliance Committee on the Committee's activities since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- ii. thanked the Compliance Committee for the work done;
- iii. expressed its appreciation to the outgoing members of the Compliance Committee for their professional support;
- iv. elected the Compliance Committee members: Ms. Rodica Iordanov (nominated by Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Tina Janjatovic (nominated by Serbia);
- v. took note of the statement by EU and its Member States.

Item 5: Development of the Protocol

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of the information provided by Kazakhstan, Switzerland, United Kingdom, the European Union and its Member States and European ECO Forum;
- ii. adopted the draft decision IV/2 on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/14).

Item 6: Programme of work and operation of the Protocol

a) Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of the report on the implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/8) and of the Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Protocol's work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/9), and the oral report by the secretariat;
- ii. warmly thanked Parties for their financial and in-kind contributions and expressed great appreciation to in kind-contributions provided by partner organisations;
- iii. expressed its appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding.

b) Future work programme for 2022-2025

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of information provided by European Union and its Member States and European ECO Forum;
- ii. adopted draft decision IV/3 on the work programme for 2022–2025 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/13);
- iii. reiterated its requests that documents for meetings of governing and subsidiary Protocol's bodies as well as reports of the global round tables on PRTRs organized under the auspices of the Protocol, should be processed, translated and published by the United Nations services and be made available in the three official languages of the UNECE without recourse to additional extra-budgetary resources;
- iv. requested the secretariat that any required publications in accordance with activities under the Protocol's work programme, e.g. activities E and G, should be processed and translated by UN services into the three official languages of the UNECE and publications related to SDGs should be processed and translated by UN services into all six official UN languages without recourse to additional extra-budgetary resources and be made available in electronic and hard copy forms.

c) Financial arrangements

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of statements provided by European Union and its Member States, Switzerland and United Kingdom;
- ii. adopted draft decision IV/4 on financial arrangements under the Protocol as amended at the meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.4).

Item 7: Election of officers and other members of the Bureau

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. thanked the outgoing members of the Bureau for their work in the Bureau;
- ii. elected by consensus:
Mr. Tone Kvasič (Slovenia) as Chair;
Ms. Enkeleda Shkurta (Albania) and Mr. Alex Radway (European Union) as Vice-Chairs
from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting, in accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure.
- iii. it also elected by consensus the following members of the Bureau from among the representatives of the Parties in accordance with rule 22, paragraph 1(b):

Ms. Marie-Rose van den Hende (Belgium)

Mr. Eduard Hlavatý (Czechia)

Ms. Teresa Palomar (Spain)

Mr. Bohdan Papusha (Ukraine)

iv. took note of the appointment by the European ECO Forum of Mr. Christian Schaible (NGO) to attend the meetings of the Bureau as an observer invited by the Bureau, in accordance with paragraph 3 of decision I/1.

Item 8: Date and venue of the fifth ordinary session

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. took note of the provided information;
- ii. decided to hold its next ordinary session in 2025;

iii. mandated the Working Group of the Parties to consider at its next meeting a possible date and venue for the fifth ordinary session.

Item 9: Review and adoption of decisions

The Meeting of the Parties adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the session, as contained in this document (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.5), and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions in it.
