

## **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**

#### **Seventh session, including High-Level Segment**

Geneva, 18–21 October 2021

### **Draft list of key decisions and outcomes<sup>1</sup>**

*as adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session*

#### Preparatory segment

## **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of the information provided by the Chair and the secretariat.
- ii. Took note of statements by the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and European ECO-Forum.
- iii. Adopted the provisional agenda of the meeting (ECE/MP.PP/2021/1).
- iv. Adopted the operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention due to extraordinary circumstances (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.1), as amended at the meeting.

## **3. Finalization of pending documents**

### **(a) Draft decision on effective public participation in decision-making**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of statements by Italy and European ECO-Forum;
- ii. Approved the draft decision (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.2), as amended at the meeting, and forwarded it to the general segment of the seventh session for provisional adoption.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the document will be incorporated in the report of the meeting.

**(b) Draft decision on reporting requirements**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of statements by Malta and the Republic of Moldova;
- ii. Approved the draft decision (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.3), as amended at the meeting, and forwarded it to the general segment of the seventh session for provisional adoption.

**(c) Draft decision VII/9 on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of statements by Austria, Belarus, the European Union, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and European ECO Forum.

*The Meeting of the Parties considered draft decision VII/9 on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and agreed to continue discussion on this draft decision at the general segment.*

**(d) Draft Declaration**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of statements by Belarus, the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
- ii. Approved the draft Declaration (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.4-ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.1), as amended at the meeting, and forwarded it to the High-level Segment for adoption.

**(e) Draft decision on financial arrangements**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of the statements by the European Union, Georgia, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom.

*The Meeting of the Parties considered draft decision VII/6 on financial arrangements under the Convention, and agreed to continue discussion on this draft decision at the general segment.*

**(f) Draft decisions on compliance**

The Meeting of the Parties

i. Took note of the statements by Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, the European Union, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom and European ECO-Forum;

ii. Provisionally adopted:

Draft decision VII/8 (a) on compliance by Armenia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/24);

Draft decision VII/8 (b) on compliance by Austria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/25);

Draft decision VII/8 (d) on compliance by Bulgaria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/27);

Draft decision VII/8 (e) on compliance by Czechia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/28);

Draft decision VII/8 (g) on compliance by Germany (ECE/MP.PP/2021/30);

Draft decision VII/8 (h) on compliance by Hungary (ECE/MP.PP/2021/31);

Draft decision VII/8 (i) on compliance by Ireland (ECE/MP.PP/2021/32);

Draft decision VII/8 (j) on compliance by Italy (ECE/MP.PP/2021/33);

Draft decision VII/8 (k) on compliance by Kazakhstan (ECE/MP.PP/2021/34);

Draft decision VII/8 (l) on compliance by Lithuania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/35);

Draft decision VII/8 (m) on compliance by the Netherlands  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/36);

Draft decision VII/8 (n) on compliance by the Republic of Moldova  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/37);

Draft decision VII/8 (o) on compliance by Romania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/38);

Draft decision VII/8 (p) on compliance by Spain (ECE/MP.PP/2021/39);

Draft decision VII/8 (q) on compliance by Turkmenistan (ECE/MP.PP/2021/40);

Draft decision VII/8 (r) on compliance by Ukraine (ECE/MP.PP/2021/41);

Draft decision VII/8 (s) on compliance by the United Kingdom  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/42)

and forwarded the above-mentioned draft decisions to the general segment of the seventh session for provisional adoption.

*The Meeting of the Parties considered the draft decision VII/8 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.PP/2021/23), and agreed to continue discussion on this draft decision at the general segment.*

*The Meeting of the Parties considered the draft decision VI/8 (c) on compliance by Belarus (ECE/MP.PP/2021/26), and agreed to continue discussion on this draft decision at the general segment.*

*The Meeting of the Parties considered the draft decision VI/8 (f) on compliance by European Union (ECE/MP.PP/2021/29), and agreed to continue discussion on this draft decision at the general segment.*

## General segment

### **4. Opening of the general segment**

The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statement by Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, UNECE Environment Division.

### **5. Status of ratification of the Convention and the amendment to the Convention**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the status of ratification of the Convention and its amendment. Since the previous session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2017, the number of Parties to the Convention has remained unchanged: there are 47 Parties to the Convention;
- ii. Welcomed the ratification of the GMO amendment by Albania. The number of Parties to the amendment to the Convention had risen from 31 to 32.

### **6. Substantive issues**

#### **(a) Access to information, including electronic information tools**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the report of the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Information on the activities of the Task Force since the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties.
- ii. Thanked Mr. Chris Steenmans, European Environment Agency, and Mr. Christian Schaible, European ECO Forums, for their keynote statements.
- iii. Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/1 on promoting effective access to information (ECE/MP.PP/2021/8)
- iv. Provisionally adopted Draft updated recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/2021/20 and ECE/MP.PP/2021/20/Add.1)
- v. Thanked the Task Force for the work done during the intersessional period and to the Chair for her skilled leadership.
- vi. Expressed its appreciation to Republic of Moldova for chairing the Task Force and welcomed its offer to continue leading this work area in the next intersessional period.

## **(b) Public participation in decision-making**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the report by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making on the activities of the Task Force since the sixth meeting of the Parties.
- ii. Thanked Ms. Stock, European ECO Forums, for her keynote statement.
- iv. Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/2 on promoting effective public participation in decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.2).
- v. Thanked the Task Force for the work done during the intersessional period and its Chair for her skilled leadership.
- vi. Expressed its appreciation to Italy for chairing the Task Force and welcomed its offer to continue leading this work area in the next intersessional period.

## **(c) Access to justice**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the report by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice on the activities of the Task Force since the sixth Meeting of the Parties (due to connection problems, the Chair was not able to deliver the statement but it has been made available on the meeting website).
- ii. Thanked Ms. Lorena Çabej, Legal Advisor at the Supreme Court of Albania and Mr. Csaba Kiss, European ECO-Forum for their keynote statements.
- iii. Took note of statements by the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and European ECO-Forum.
- iv. Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/3 on promoting effective access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/2021/10).
- v. Thanked the Task Force for the work done during the intersessional period and to its Chair for his skilled leadership.
- vi. Expressed its appreciation to Sweden for chairing the Task Force and welcomed the offer of Belgium to lead this work area in the next intersessional period.
- vii. Welcomed the new Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice.

## **(d) Genetically modified organisms**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the report by the Chair of the third Joint Round Table on Public Awareness, Access to Information and Public Participation regarding LMOs/GMOs on the activities of the thematic session since the sixth meeting of the Parties and thanked the Chair for the work done and for his skilled leadership.

- ii. Thanked Ms. Wadzanayi Mandivenyi, secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Ms. Antje Lorch, European ECO-Forum, for their keynote statements.
- iii. Took note of statements by the European Union, United Kingdom and European ECO-Forum.
- iv. Urged Parties whose ratification of the GMO amendment would count towards its entry into force — i.e., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine — to take urgent steps towards ratification of the GMO amendment; and called upon other Parties to ratify the GMO amendment.
- v. Mandated the Working Group to monitor closely the progress of entering in force of the GMO amendment.
- vi. Called upon Parties and partner organizations to offer bilateral assistance, capacity-building and technical support to Parties whose ratification of the GMO amendment would count towards its entry into force.
- vii. Requested that amended text of the Convention once it enters into force should be processed, translated and published by the United Nations services and be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations without recourse to additional extra-budgetary resources.
- viii. Thanked Austria for its leadership in this area of work and welcomed its offer to continue leading this work area in the next intersessional period.
- ix. Welcomed the effective cooperation between the secretariats of the Aarhus Convention and of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and requested to continue this cooperation in the next intersessional period through e.g., organizing a joint event.

## **7. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention**

### **(a) Reporting mechanism**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the information provided in national implementation reports submitted by Parties and the synthesis report prepared by the secretariat.
- ii. Took note of reports prepared by stakeholders.
- iii. Recognized the need for timely submission of national implementation reports in order to ensure a good quality of the synthesis report and its timely submission for translation.
- iv. Noted with regret that 40% (19 Parties) of the Parties did not submit their reports by the set deadline.
- v. Urged Parties that have not submitted their national implementation reports: Azerbaijan, Malta, the Netherlands, Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan to do so by latest 1 December 2021 in required format.
- vi. Expressed its deep concern that the Republic of Moldova had also still not yet submitted its national implementation report for the fifth 2017

reporting cycle — the only country that had not done so — and called upon the Compliance Committee under paragraph 13 (c) of the annex to decision I/7 to consider the ongoing failure by the Republic of Moldova to submit its report for the fifth and sixth cycles.

- vii. Took note of statements by the European Union and European ECO-Forum.
- viii. Provisionally adopted draft decision VII/7 on reporting requirements, as amended at the meeting (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.3).

## **(b) Compliance mechanism**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Paid tribute to Mr. Veit Koester, who had passed away in September 2021.
- ii. Welcomed the Reports by the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PP/2021/44 and ECE/MP.PP/2021/45).
- iii. Thanked the Chair and other Compliance Committee members for their work in this intersessional period.
- iv. Thanked Mr. Andriy Andrusevych, European ECO-Forum, for his keynote statement.
- v. Took note of statements by the European Union, Norway, European ECO-Forum.
- vi. Provisionally adopted
  - Draft decision VII/8 (a) on compliance by Armenia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/24);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (b) on compliance by Austria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/25);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (d) on compliance by Bulgaria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/27);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (e) on compliance by Czechia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/28);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (g) on compliance by Germany (ECE/MP.PP/2021/30);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (h) on compliance by Hungary (ECE/MP.PP/2021/31);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (i) on compliance by Ireland (ECE/MP.PP/2021/32);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (j) on compliance by Italy (ECE/MP.PP/2021/33);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (k) on compliance by Kazakhstan (ECE/MP.PP/2021/34);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (l) on compliance by Lithuania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/35);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (m) on compliance by the Netherlands (ECE/MP.PP/2021/36);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (n) on compliance by Republic of Moldova (ECE/MP.PP/2021/37);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (o) on compliance by Romania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/38);
  - Draft decision VII/8 (p) on compliance by Spain (ECE/MP.PP/2021/39);

Draft decision VII/8 (q) on compliance by Turkmenistan  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/40);

Draft decision VII/8 (r) on compliance by Ukraine (ECE/MP.PP/2021/41);

Draft decision VII/8 (s) on compliance by the United Kingdom  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/42):

Provisionally adopted draft decision, as amended at the meeting

Draft decision VII/8 (f) on compliance by European Union  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.6/Rev.1),

With regard to draft decision VI/8 (f) on compliance by European Union  
(ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.6/Rev.1), the Meeting of the Parties agreed to  
include the following accompanying text in the report of its seventh  
session and reflect the statements by Norway, Switzerland and ECO Forum  
in the meeting report as follows:

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Adopts draft decision VII/8f concerning compliance by the European Union with its obligations under the Convention, as amended at the meeting.
- ii. Decides to include in the meeting report the following text:

With regard to draft decision VII/8f concerning compliance by the European Union with its obligations under the Convention, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to include the following text in the report of its seventh session:

“In the spirit of reaching consensus, the Meeting of the Parties exceptionally decided, by consensus, to postpone the decision-making on the Committee’s findings and recommendations on communication ACCC/C/2015/128 (European Union) to the next ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties to be held in 2025. The Meeting of Parties stresses that this exceptional decision shall in no way establish a practice under the Convention. The Meeting of the Parties also requested the Committee to review any developments that have taken place regarding the matter, and to report to the Meeting of the Parties accordingly.”

In this context, the Party concerned stated that it reaffirms its commitment to implement its obligations under the Convention. In this regard, the Meeting of the Parties:

Took note of the statements by Norway, Switzerland and ECO Forum and of their requests to reflect their positions in the meeting report.

- vi. Re-elected by consensus the following member of the Compliance Committee: Ms. Áine Ryall, nominated by Ireland.



- vii. Elected by consensus Ms. Eleanor Sharpsten, nominated by Luxembourg and Mr. Thomas Schomerus, nominated by Ökobüro on behalf of European ECO-Forum (NGO) as new members of the Compliance Committee.

*The Meeting of the Parties continued deliberations on the draft decision VII/8 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.PP/2021/23).*

*The Meeting of the Parties continued deliberations on the draft decision VI/8 (c) on compliance by Belarus (ECE/MP.PP/2021/26).*

### **(c) Rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Welcomed the offer of Austria and Ireland to lead the newly established rapid response mechanism and welcomed their offer to provide financial support to the rapid response mechanism for the next intersessional period.
- ii. Thanked Ms. Mary Lawlor, Special rapporteur human rights defenders and Mr. Yves Lador, European ECO-Forum, for their keynote statements.
- iii. Took note of statement and other relevant information provided by UNEP.
- iv. Provisionally adopts Draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), as amended at the meeting.

With regard to draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), the Meeting of the Parties agreed to include the following accompanying text in the report of its seventh session and reflect the statement by Belarus in the meeting report as follows:

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Adopts draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), as amended at the meeting.
- ii. Decides to include in the meeting report the following text:

Belarus reserves its position that it may not recognize the candidature of a special rapporteur not elected through consensus.
- iii. Took note of the statement by European ECO-Forum.

## **(d) Capacity-building**

### The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Thanked Ms. Laura Altinger, UNDP, Mr. Christian Melis, OSCE, and Ms. Olga Zakharova of Aarhus Centre Belarus, for their keynote statements.
- ii. Took note of the information provided by Armenia, the European Union, Georgia and European ECO-Forum on the capacity-building activities undertaken during the intersessional period to promote more effective implementation of the Convention;
- iii. Welcomed the work undertaken by partner organizations as presented in report on capacity-building (ECE/MP.PP/2021/7) and expressed its appreciation to partner organizations for their continued support to the implementation of the Convention;
- iv. Requested the secretariat to continue servicing capacity-building coordination mechanism;
- v. Encouraged national focal points to the Convention to support assistance programmes which address the capacity-building needs regarding the Aarhus Convention and Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration;
- vi. Reiterated its call to Parties to continue reaching out to authorities responsible for development assistance and technical cooperation to explore the possibility of integrating the Convention into those programmes as a critical enabler for sustainable development;
- vii. Reiterated its call on Parties to liaise with officials supporting the work related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to make sure that: the needs related to the Convention's implementation were addressed in the Framework; and the nexus approach to environment, human rights and good governance received special attention in the Framework.

## **8. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages**

### **(a) Accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

#### The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Thanked Mr. Mario Camala, Guinea-Bissau, and Ms. Francesca Carlsson, European ECO-Forum, for their keynote statements.
- ii. Took note of the statements by Guinea-Bissau, the European Union, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and European ECO-Forum.
- iii. Provisionally adopted draft decision VII/10 on accession by Guinea-Bissau to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/21).
- iv. Welcomed Guinea-Bissau as new Party to the Aarhus Convention and first Party from outside the UNECE region to accede to the Aarhus Convention.

- v. Took note of the information provided by delegations on activities relating to the promotion of accession to the Convention by States from outside the ECE region.
- vi. Called upon Parties, donors, international financial institutions, international organizations and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Convention in the new Parties.
- viii. Called upon Parties and stakeholders to promote the Convention in other countries and encourages those countries to explore accession to the Convention.

## **(b) Promotion of the Convention's principles**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the report by the Chair of the thematic session on Public Participation in International Forums on the activities of the thematic session since the sixth meeting of the Parties and thanked the Chair for the work done and for her skilled leadership.
- ii. Thanked Ms. Piera Laloux, EIB, and Mr. Sébastien Duyck, European ECO-Forum, for their keynote statements.
- iii. Took note of statements by the European Union, Switzerland, United Kingdom and European ECO-Forum.  
Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/11).
- iv. Thanked France for its leadership in this area of work and welcomes its offer to continue leading this work area in the next intersessional period.
- v. Welcomed the new Chair of the thematic session on Public Participation in International Forums.

## **(c) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other partners**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Thanked Mr. Benjamin Schachter, OHCHR, and Ms. Tatjana Hema, UNEP/MAP for their keynote statements.
- ii. Took note of the statements by Switzerland and European ECO-Forum.
- iii. Thanked multilateral environmental agreements and partner organizations for close cooperation with the secretariat on promoting relevant provisions of the Convention.
- iv. Requested the secretariat to continue pursuing synergy with other treaties, bodies and processes and thanked partners for cooperation

## **(d) Global and regional developments on issues related to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Welcomed the entry into force of the Escazu Agreement and reiterated the readiness of Parties to support the region in implementing the provisions of the Escazu Agreement.
- ii. Took note of the information provided by Ms. Katinka Weinberger from ESCAP on the regional developments and future actions on promoting Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in

- the Asia Pacific region and benefits from learning from the experience on the Aarhus Convention.
- iii. Welcomed efforts of States and civil society in the Asia-Pacific region in this regard and expresses its readiness to support the region in its endeavours.

**(e) Update on United Nations Environment Programme initiatives on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters**

The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statement by UNEP.

**9. Programme of work and operation of the Convention**

**(a) Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of (a) the Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021; and (b) the Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2018–2021;
- ii. Took note of the secretariats oral report on contributions and pledges for the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2018–2021, which were not included in the report to the Meeting of the Parties;
- viii. Expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognizes the difficulties posed by the limited and unpredictable funding.

**(b) Future work programme for 2022-2025**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the statements by the European Union and Norway.
- ii. Reiterated its request that documents for meetings of governing and subsidiary Convention's bodies (e.g., reports of the task forces; on capacity-building and on GMO round tables), as required, 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.
- iii. Requested the secretariat that any required publications in accordance with activities under the Convention's work programme should be processed and translated by UN services into the three official languages of the UNECE and publications should be processed and translated by UN services into all six official United Nations languages without recourse to additional extra-budgetary resources and be made available in electronic and hard copy forms.
- iv. Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/5 on the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/2021/12).

### **(c) Strategic Plan for 2022-2030**

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Took note of the statements by the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and European ECO-Forum.
- ii. Provisionally adopted Draft decision VII/11 on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (ECE/MP.PP/2021/22).

### **(d) Financial arrangements**

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Took note of statements by the European Union, Norway and Switzerland;
- ii. Provisionally adopted draft decision on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.7), as amended at the meeting.

## **10. Report on credentials with regard to the Convention's Parties**

The Meeting of the Parties approved the report on credentials and noted that 42 Parties had submitted credentials and thus a quorum had been reached. While it was noted that eight credentials were not originals, the Bureau recommended to the Meeting to accept them, subject to subsequent submission of duly signed originals to the Secretary.

## **11. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau**

The Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus:

- i. Elected by consensus
  - Mr. Aurimas Saladžius (Lithuania) as Chair;
  - Ms. Nino Gokhelashvili (Georgia) and
  - Ms. Nicolette Bouman (Netherlands) as Vice-Chairs

from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting, in accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure.

- ii. 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. Enkelejda Malaj (Albania)
  - Ms. Zsuzsanna Belenyessy (European Union)
  - Ms. Chiara Landini (Italy)
  - Ms. Alla Loboda (Ukraine)
- iii. Took note of appointment by the European ECO Forum of Ms. Summer Kern (NGO) to attend the meetings of the Bureau as an observer, in accordance with rule 22, paragraphs 2 and 4.

## 12. Date and venue of the eighth ordinary session

The Meeting of the Parties:

- i. Decided to hold its next ordinary session in 2025;
- ii. Mandated the Working Group of the Parties to consider at its next meeting a possible date and venue for the eighth ordinary session

## 13. Any other business

No issues were discussed.

## Joint High-level Segment, 21 October 2021

### 5. Decisions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its seventh session

1. Based on the discussions under the preceding agenda items, the Meeting of the Parties

i. formally adopted the following decisions by consensus:

- Decision VII/1 on promoting effective access to information (ECE/MP.PP/2021/8);
- Updated recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/2021/20 and ECE/MP.PP/2021/20/Add.1);
- Decision VII/2 on promoting effective public participation in decision-making, as amended at the meeting (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.2);
- Decision VII/3 on promoting effective access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/2021/10);
- Decision VII/7 on reporting requirements, as amended at the meeting (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.3);
- Decision VII/8 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.5), as amended at the meeting, during the High-level Segment (item 5);
- Decision VII/8 (a) on compliance by Armenia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/24);
- Decision VII/8 (b) on compliance by Austria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/25);
- Decision VII/8 (d) on compliance by Bulgaria (ECE/MP.PP/2021/27);
- Decision VII/8 (e) on compliance by Czechia (ECE/MP.PP/2021/28);
- Decision VII/8 (f) on compliance by European Union (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.6/Rev.1), as amended at the meeting.

With regard to draft decision VI/8 (f) on compliance by European Union (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.6/Rev.1), the Meeting of the Parties agreed to include the following accompanying text in the report of its seventh session and reflect the statements by Norway, Switzerland and ECO Forum in the meeting report as follows:

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Adopts draft decision VII/8f concerning compliance by the European Union with its obligations under the Convention, as amended at the meeting.
  - ii. Decides to include in the meeting report the following text:

With regard to draft decision VII/8f concerning compliance by the European Union with its obligations under the Convention, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to include the following text in the report of its seventh session:

“In the spirit of reaching consensus, the Meeting of the Parties exceptionally decided, by consensus, to postpone the decision-making on the Committee’s findings and recommendations on communication ACCC/C/2015/128 (European Union) to the next ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties to be held in 2025. The Meeting of Parties stresses that this exceptional decision shall in no way establish a practice under the Convention. The Meeting of the Parties also requested the Committee to review any developments that have taken place regarding the matter, and to report to the Meeting of the Parties accordingly.”

In this context, the Party concerned stated that it reaffirms its commitment to implement its obligations under the Convention. In this regard, the Meeting of the Parties:

Took note of the statements by Norway, Switzerland and ECO Forum and of their requests to reflect their positions in the meeting report.
- Decision VII/8 (g) on compliance by Germany (ECE/MP.PP/2021/30);
  - Decision VII/8 (h) on compliance by Hungary (ECE/MP.PP/2021/31);
  - Decision VII/8 (i) on compliance by Ireland (ECE/MP.PP/2021/32);
  - Decision VII/8 (j) on compliance by Italy (ECE/MP.PP/2021/33);
  - Decision VII/8 (k) on compliance by Kazakhstan (ECE/MP.PP/2021/34);
  - Decision VII/8 (l) on compliance by Lithuania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/35);
  - Decision VII/8 (m) on compliance by the Netherlands (ECE/MP.PP/2021/36);
  - Decision VII/8 (n) on compliance by Republic of Moldova (ECE/MP.PP/2021/37);
  - Decision VII/8 (o) on compliance by Romania (ECE/MP.PP/2021/38);
  - Decision VII/8 (p) on compliance by Spain (ECE/MP.PP/2021/39);
  - Decision VII/8 (q) on compliance by Turkmenistan (ECE/MP.PP/2021/40);
  - Decision VII/8 (r) on compliance by Ukraine (ECE/MP.PP/2021/41);
  - Decision VII/8 (s) on compliance by the United Kingdom (ECE/MP.PP/2021/42);
  - Decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), as amended at the meeting.

With regard to draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), the Meeting of the Parties agreed to include the following accompanying text in the report of its seventh session and reflect the statement by Belarus in the session's report as follows:

The Meeting of the Parties

- i. Adopts draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.8), as amended at the meeting.
  - ii. Decides to include in the meeting report the following text:

Belarus reserves its position that it may not recognize the candidature of a special rapporteur not elected through consensus.

    - Decision VII/5 on the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/2021/12).
    - Decision VII/11 on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (ECE/MP.PP/2021/22).
    - Decision on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.7), as amended at the meeting.
  - ii. formally adopted the following decision, as amended at the meeting, by a vote during the High-level Segment:
    - Decision VI/8 (c) on compliance by Belarus (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.10), as amended at the meeting.
  - iii. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the other major outcomes presented at the meeting as contained in the present document ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.9/Rev.1 and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties, to finalize the report and to incorporate the adopted outcomes and decisions.
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