

**Economic Commission for Europe****World Health Organization  
Regional Office for Europe**

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on  
Water and Health to the Convention on  
the Protection and Use of Transboundary  
Watercourses and International Lakes

**Compliance Committee**

**Twenty-second meeting**  
Geneva, 16 November 2021

**Report of the Compliance Committee on its twenty-second  
meeting****I. Organizational matters**

1. The twenty-second meeting of the Compliance Committee under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held on 16 November 2021, in Geneva, in a hybrid format.<sup>1</sup>

2. The following members of the Committee attended: Ms. Ingrid Chorus; Ms. Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper (Vice-Chair); Mr. Vadim Ni; Ms. Natalja Sliachtic; Ms. Anna Tsvietkova; Mr. Sergei Vinogradov; and Mr. Jorge Viñuales (Chair). The quorum requirement contained in paragraph 12 of the Committee's rules of procedure<sup>2</sup> was therefore met. A delegation of the Russian Federation, invited to consult with the Committee, attended the session on the Consultation Process. A representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting, as well as a representative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), also attended parts of the meeting as observers. The meeting was serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat.

**II. Adoption of the agenda**

3. The Compliance Committee adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WH/C.1/2021/3-EUCHP/2018917/4.1/2021/CC2/03.

<sup>1</sup> For additional information, list of participants and documents, see <https://unece.org/info/events/event/358474>.

<sup>2</sup> Available at [https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/meetings/CC/Rules\\_of\\_procedure\\_Committee\\_revised\\_Nov2012.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/meetings/CC/Rules_of_procedure_Compliance_Committee_revised_Nov2012.pdf).



4. The Committee paid tribute to the late Mr. Veit Koester, former member and Chair of the Compliance Committee, who sadly passed away shortly before the Committee's meeting, for his contribution to the development and promotion of the compliance procedure under the Protocol.

### **III. Consideration of submissions, referrals and communications**

5. The Committee noted that no submissions, referrals or communications had been received prior to the meeting.

### **IV. Review of compliance with the obligation to set targets and target dates**

6. The Committee followed up on the status of target setting under the Protocol in two Parties: Albania and Belgium.

7. With regard to the situation in Albania, the secretariat informed the Committee that an official letter had been received from the country, which contained analysis of correspondence between the targets set under the draft National Sectoral Strategy on Water and Sanitation for 2019–2030 and several target areas covered by article 6 of the Protocol. The letter, as well as other information available to the Committee, however, suggested that the Strategy had not yet been adopted, and did not specify any timeline for adoption.

8. The Committee noted with concern that the draft targets identified by Albania as part of the future National Strategy did not address all of the target areas required by article 6 of the Protocol. The Committee therefore requested the secretariat to send a letter to Albania, requesting the country to provide clear information when submitting its national summary report under the Protocol's upcoming fifth reporting cycle on whether the National Sectoral Strategy on Water and Sanitation had been adopted, as well as whether the final version of the Strategy addressed all of the target areas required by article 6. Furthermore, if certain target areas were not to be covered by the Strategy, the Committee requested explanation on whether those were addressed by other relevant laws and policies, or whether Albania considered that national or local circumstances made target setting in certain areas irrelevant and, if so, to provide a justification to that effect.

9. With regard to the situation in Belgium, the Committee noted with appreciation the finalization and publication of the report of the Brussels Capital Region, submitted as a complement to the national report of Belgium within the Protocol's fourth reporting cycle.<sup>3</sup> The Committee emphasized, however, that it was expecting Belgium to submit a joint national summary report – covering all the country's territorial subdivisions – within the Protocol's fifth reporting cycle.

### **V. Report of the Committee to the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session**

10. The Committee discussed the preparation of the report on its activities, to be submitted to the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its sixth session (Geneva, 16–18 November 2022). With respect to the process and timeline, the Chair recalled that the fifth reporting cycle under the Protocol would be launched in November 2021, with a deadline of 20 April 2022 for countries to submit national summary reports. Committee members would therefore analyse reports submitted by Protocol Parties and other States between May and June 2022 and, on that basis, the report of the Committee would be prepared together with the draft decision on general issues of compliance and submitted as an official document to the Meeting of the Parties by the end of August 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://unece.org/reporting-parties-and-other-states>.

11. Subsequently, the Committee discussed the content and format of the report, outlined a preliminary table of contents, and agreed on the modalities for preparatory work, including an allocation of responsibilities for analysis of the summary reports. In that respect, the Committee took note of the draft template developed by the secretariat with the aim of supporting and harmonizing analysis by Committee members. The secretariat would provide further guidance on how to fill in the template in due course.

## VI. Consultation Process

12. The Committee noted with appreciation the participation of the delegation of the Russian Federation, headed by Ms. Zoya Sereda (Division of International Cooperation and Public Relations, Ministry of Health) and composed of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Water Resources Agency, the Federal State Institute for Hygiene and Public Health, the Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare and a number of research and academic institutions.

13. The Vice-Chair of the Committee and Chair of the dedicated working group on the Consultation Process with the Russian Federation recalled that, upon submission of the draft document containing information on the targets of the Russian Federation under article 6 of the Protocol, extensive work had been undertaken by members of the working group and the secretariat to analyse the information provided. On that basis, preliminary feedback and recommendations had been submitted to the Russian Federation prior to the current meeting.

14. The representative of the Russian Federation subsequently presented the draft targets, including clear information on correspondence with the target areas required under article 6 of the Protocol, target dates for achievement, normative instruments containing the targets, and institutions responsible for implementation at the federal level. She further indicated correspondence with the relevant targets under the Sustainable Development Goals related to water, sanitation, hygiene and health.

15. The Vice-Chair welcomed the very comprehensive presentation made by the representative of the Russian Federation and noted with appreciation that many of the comments provided by the Committee in advance of the meeting had already been taken into account in the draft targets presented. Subsequently, members of the dedicated working group under the Committee provided overall feedback and specific recommendations on the targets presented, commending the progress made by the Russian Federation and noting with appreciation that the draft targets covered almost all of the target areas required in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol, as well as indicating target dates and responsible institutions.

16. Representatives of the Russian Federation expressed appreciation for the advice provided by the Committee, with support of the secretariat, through its comments on the draft targets, as well as its oral recommendations, and requested that said feedback be shared in written form. They also highlighted the positive contribution of the Consultation Process in driving forward target setting at the national level, as well as the fact that consultations had provided an opportunity for an intersectoral dialogue on the issues of water, sanitation, hygiene and health within the inter-agency working group that had been established for facilitating the implementation of the Protocol.

17. The Committee welcomed the above-mentioned developments, commended the good results achieved through the Consultation Process and thanked representatives of the Russian Federation, as well as members of the dedicated working group, for the work undertaken.

18. The following next steps were agreed:

(a) The Committee would send an official letter summarizing the outcomes of the Consultation Process and conveying its overall feedback and specific recommendations, including those shared prior to the meeting and those given at the meeting itself by Committee members;

(b) The Russian Federation would prepare a table of correspondence between the targets set under national laws and policies and the target areas under article 6 of the Protocol,

and submit it together with its national summary report under the Protocol's fifth reporting cycle;

(c) The Committee would review the national summary report of the Russian Federation, along with the final targets, and discuss any possible follow-up action as may be advisable when analysing the outcomes of the fifth reporting cycle.

## **VII. Facilitating compliance with the obligations under the Protocol**

19. The Committee discussed the advanced annotated outline of the interpretive note entitled "The Protocol on Water and Health and the protection of individual and public health", developed by the Chair and the secretariat and shared in advance of the meeting.

20. It was decided that the drafting period for the note would be extended to account for the resource-intensity of the exercise and the limited resources available. However, a draft note would be submitted to the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties as an informal document. The Committee further observed that the note would benefit from a public process of review at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. Thereafter, the note could be finalized with support from the joint secretariat and published as an annex to the report of the first Committee meeting for the 2023–2025 triennium.

## **VIII. Awareness-raising on the compliance procedure**

21. The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the development of a new promotional brochure on the Protocol and encouraged Committee members to make use of the brochure, once it became available, on any relevant occasion.

22. With respect to the webinar aimed at highlighting the legal dimension of work under the Protocol, the Committee decided to organize it as a hybrid side event at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties. The latter event would be a good opportunity to attract visibility and to showcase the work of the Committee.

## **IX. Programme of work and calendar of future meetings**

23. The Committee highlighted that its twenty-third meeting would be instrumental in the preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties, discussing in particular the analysis of the fifth reporting cycle under the Protocol and the format and possible content of the draft decision on general issues of compliance.

24. To allow sufficient time for analysis of national summary reports, the Committee decided to postpone its twenty-third meeting to 7 June 2022, to be held either in Geneva or in hybrid format, depending on the situation regarding travel restrictions.

## **X. Adoption of the report**

25. The Committee adopted its report by electronic means after the meeting.

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