



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

Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its fourth session
Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	2
A. Attendance	2
B. Organizational matters	2
II. Report on credentials 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	3
III. Status of ratification of the Protocol	3
IV. Promotion and capacity-building	3
A. Coordination mechanisms and synergies	3
B. Subregional and national activities	5
V. Reporting and compliance mechanisms	6
A. Reporting mechanism	6
B. Compliance mechanism	7
VI. Development of the Protocol	7
VII. Programme of work and operation of the Protocol	8
A. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021	8
B. Future work programme for 2022–2025	9
C. Financial arrangements	9
VIII. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau	10
IX. Date and venue of the fifth ordinary session	10
X. Review and adoption of decisions of the session	10



I. Introduction

1. The fourth session of the 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 (Aarhus Convention) was held in Geneva, on 22 October 2021. The meeting was organized back-to-back with the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention (18–20 October 2021). A Joint High-level Segment of the two bodies was held on 21 October 2021.¹

A. Attendance

2. The fourth session was attended by delegations from the following Parties and signatories to the Protocol: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

3. Delegations from Canada, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco and Uzbekistan were also present.

4. In addition, representatives of the following United Nations system organizations were present: the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UNEP Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean (MAP) and the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Other international organizations represented at the meeting included the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

5. Representatives of Aarhus Centres, international financial institutions and business, professional, research and academic organizations were also present, as were representatives of international, regional and national environmental organizations. Many of the latter coordinated their input within the framework of the European ECO-Forum.

B. Organizational matters

6. Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden), Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), opened the meeting and informed participants that, with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations and reducing the amount of paper used, a list of decisions and outcomes adopted at the session would be made available to delegations electronically and then read out by the Chair, allowing for interpretation, prior to adoption. The adopted key outcomes and decisions would then be incorporated into the meeting report.²

7. The Chair further recalled that the report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties had taken place at the joint High-level Segment,³ and that 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 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.2), and the Geneva Declaration on Environmental Democracy for Sustainable, Inclusive and

¹ Documents for the meeting, including statements delivered at the meeting that were made available to the secretariat by delegates, are available at https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Protocol_PRTRs_MoPP4.

² For practical reasons, decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties are being issued in an addendum to the present report (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/6/Add.1).

³ For practical reasons, the report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties and the adoption of the operating procedures is being included in the present report.

Resilient Development (ECE/MP.PP/2021/CRP.4–ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.1)⁴ had been adopted by consensus as amended at that meeting.

8. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided by the Chair and adopted the provisional agenda for its fourth session (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/5).

II. Report on credentials 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

9. The Meeting of the Parties approved the report on credentials presented at the High-level Segment by the Chair, noting that there was a quorum for the purposes of elections and the adoption of decisions. In total, 34 Parties submitted their credentials. The Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol adopted 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).

III. Status of ratification of the Protocol

10. The secretariat reported that, since the adoption of the Protocol in 2003, 38 States had become signatories and there were currently 38 Parties. The Protocol had entered into force on 8 October 2009. Since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties (Budva, Montenegro, 15 September 2017), Montenegro, Kazakhstan and Italy had become Parties – on 11 October 2017, 24 January 2020 and 23 November 2020, respectively⁵. Furthermore, a representative of the European Union and its member States noted that the Protocol had been ratified by most United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States and encouraged all to become Parties. The representative of Kazakhstan said, among other things, that the Protocol was an important instrument for managing pollutants and for public access to information. Kazakhstan had adopted its new Environmental Code in 2021 and had incorporated the Protocol's provisions therein.

11. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the Protocol. It welcomed the accession by Kazakhstan and ratifications by Montenegro and Italy. The Meeting of the Parties encouraged signatories and other interested States to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible. The Meeting of the Parties also took note of statements by the representatives of the European Union and its member States and Kazakhstan.

IV. Promotion and capacity-building

A. Coordination mechanisms and synergies

12. Turning to the Protocol's agenda item on promotion and capacity-building and, specifically, the coordination mechanisms and synergies, the Chair invited the Meeting of the Parties to consider the report on the third Global Round Table on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/3), noting that the information contained therein would be useful for countries for implementing or applying the Protocol. The third Global Round Table had been organized on 7 and 8 November 2018 in Geneva under the auspices of ECE and OECD and in cooperation with UNITAR and UNEP. The Meeting of

⁴ Available at https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/JHLS_Aarhus_MoP7_PRTRs_MoPP4. The Geneva Declaration is being issued in an addendum to the report of the Joint High-level Segment (ECE/MP.PP/2021/16/Add.1–ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/2/Add.1).

⁵ Information on the status of ratifications is available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/prtrs-status-ratification>.

the Parties took note of the outcomes of the third Global Round Table and mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to organize a fourth such global event in the next intersessional period. The Meeting of the Parties further requested the secretariat to produce the reports of future global round tables as official documents, so that they would be available in the three official languages of ECE without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources, and to submit them to the Working Group of the Parties or to the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate.

13. The Chair then informed the participants about the most recent informal meetings of the representatives of governing bodies of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and the Committee on the Environmental Policy,⁶ held on 13 November 2017 and 28 January 2019, and relevant discussions by the Bureau at its meeting on 24 November 2016. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report.

14. The Chair of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group presented the Group's work, noting that it served as a global mechanism to facilitate and enhance cooperation on PRTRs, helping to: avoid duplication; identify possible synergies; and promote the potential of such registers. The Group's role as an information-sharing and learning platform for other international agreements and initiatives that dealt with related issues was highlighted and countries and organizations were invited to participate in the Group's work.

15. Representatives of international organizations also made statements regarding coordination and synergies to be found when working on PRTRs. A representative of UNITAR noted that its activities promoted PRTRs as tools to report on priority chemicals, such as persistent organic pollutants, and to comply with reporting requirements of different multilateral environmental agreements. Moreover, UNITAR had: organized online training sessions on the Protocol, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement); and assisted the Republic of Moldova in developing a national regulation on PRTRs in 2018.

16. A representative of UNEP MAP and the Barcelona Convention introduced coordination and capacity-building activities in 2018–2019 and 2020–2021. He noted that, in order to track progress towards the goal of a cleaner Mediterranean Sea, better data collection was needed. In that regard, using data and information collected via PRTR systems had contributed to the successful development of an assessment report for tracking progress.⁷ Other capacity-building and coordination work focused on related activities such as establishing links between industrial operators and governmental authorities and strengthening national inspection and permitting systems, as well as the review and approval of estimation techniques for loads from agriculture, catchment run-off and aquaculture aiming to complement PRTR methodology. The representative noted that estimation techniques could potentially play a key role in improving the data needed for emerging sectors in the Mediterranean, such as aquaculture.

17. A representative of OECD said that its activities on PRTRs mainly focused on improving PRTRs and harmonizing them worldwide. Another key activity was enhancing the use of PRTR data. In that context, for example, a report had recently been published entitled *Using PRTR Information to Evaluate Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goal 12: Series on Pollutant Releases and Transfer Registers No. 25*.⁸ Another activity on enhancing the use of PRTR data was the gathering of information on PRTR data application good practices. The representative of OECD encouraged countries and other

⁶ Available at <https://unece.org/joint-work-and-informal-networks>.

⁷ European Environment Agency/United Nations Environment Programme (EEA/UNEP), *Towards a cleaner Mediterranean: a decade of progress – Monitoring Horizon 2020 regional initiative*, Joint EEA-UNEP/MAP Report, EEA Report No. 07/2020 (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020).

⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris, 2021).

stakeholders to provide PRTR data application good practices with a view to incorporating them into an upcoming report and online database.

18. In the ensuing discussion, a representative of the European Union and its member States expressed strong support for PRTR-related coordinating activities with OECD, UNITAR and other organizations. He also highlighted that the Report on the third Global Round Table on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers was indeed very useful, not only for participating countries and stakeholders, but also for other countries currently in the process of establishing PRTRs.

19. Following the discussions on coordination mechanisms and synergies, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report by the Chair of the International PRTR Coordinating Group and welcomes the Group's important role in contributing to a more cross-cutting perspective of PRTR development;

(b) Requested the secretariat to continue servicing the International PRTR Coordinating Group;

(c) Took note of the information provided by partner organizations and thanked partner organizations for support provided to efforts to further the implementation of PRTR systems, thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol;

(d) Called upon partner organizations and multilateral environmental agreements to cooperate closely where possible to create synergies that furthered the implementation of PRTR-related projects and programmes;

(e) Mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to continue global promotion of the Protocol;

(f) 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, MAP, the Barcelona Convention 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 those involved in projects carried out by international organizations, so as to ensure coordination at the national level;

(g) Reiterated its call on Parties, other interested countries and organizations to promote PRTRs as a reporting tool for multilateral environmental agreements dealing with chemicals and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

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

B. Subregional and national activities

20. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the outcomes of the sections on capacity-building in the reports of the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties on its seventh and eighth meetings (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/2 and ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2020/2, respectively).

21. As for the use of electronic tools at the country level, the representative of OECD presented the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox, a problem-solving tool that enabled countries to identify the most appropriate,

efficient and cost-effective solutions to national chemicals management issues. He invited all countries wishing to set up or improve their PRTR to use the Toolbox, which included a PRTR module that provided guidance on:

- (a) PRTR initiation: designing a PRTR system, gaining support from decision-makers, and establishing the PRTR;
- (b) PRTR operation: running a PRTR, including staffing and collecting, reviewing and disseminating data;
- (c) Long-term success: expanding the benefits and activities of a PRTR and making future enhancements.

22. A representative of Participatio Environmental Policy Advisory Limited Liability Company⁹ then spoke about the launch of a new project on enhancement of PRTRs in the Western Balkan countries and the Republic of Moldova, which aimed to support the project countries in developing or upgrading their registers.

23. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted that subregional and national activities were important for the implementation of the Protocol. Furthermore, examples of modernisation of PRTRs, similarities with other reporting requirements, like the Minamata Convention, as well as some countries' achievements in establishing PRTRs, presented in the previous meetings, contributed to an improved awareness also on some of the remaining challenges for the implementation and further development of the Protocol. The development of guidance materials, capacity-building and other activities to support countries in developing PRTRs were also very beneficial and the European Union and its member States were committed to organizing and participating in relevant regional activities.

24. Following the discussion on subregional and national activities, the Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Welcomed the accession and ratification by several countries of Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, called upon those countries to demonstrate substantial progress in establishing PRTRs, and encouraged other countries in those subregions to follow their example;

- (b) Called upon countries and partner organizations to support capacity-building activities in order to advance the establishment of PRTR systems and further ratification of the Protocol;

- (c) Requested the secretariat, OECD and UNITAR to continue working closely in order to ensure the effective use of PRTR.net,¹⁰ PRTR:Learn¹¹ and other OECD PRTR websites.¹²

V. Reporting and compliance mechanisms

A. Reporting mechanism

25. The Chair of the Compliance Committee, Mr. Juan Luis Martin Ortega, introduced the Synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/10). The report was based on the information provided in national implementation reports¹³ submitted by Parties. The Chair of the Meeting of the

⁹ Mention of any firm, product, service or licensed process does not imply endorsement or criticism by the United Nations.

¹⁰ Available at <https://prtr.unece.org/>.

¹¹ Available at <https://prtr.unitar.org/site/prtr-learn>.

¹² See <https://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/pollutant-release-transfer-register/pollutantreleaseandtransferregisterprtr.htm>.

¹³ National implementation reports are available in national languages and in the official languages of ECE at, respectively, <https://unece.org/reporting-mechanism-protocol-prtrs>.

Parties then introduced draft decision IV/1 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/12).

26. The representative of the European Union and its member States welcomed draft decision IV/1, considering in particular that the timely submission of national implementation reports and a consultative and transparent process for their preparation were of the utmost importance.

27. Having considered the issue of reporting, the Meeting of the Parties:

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

(b) Recognized the need for timely submission of national implementation reports in order to ensure the good quality of the synthesis report and its timely submission for translation;

(c) Noted with regret that two Parties had not submitted their reports;

(d) Urged Parties that had not submitted their national implementation reports, namely Lithuania and Montenegro, to do so by 15 November 2021 at the latest;

(e) Adopted as amended draft decision IV/1 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.3) by consensus;

(f) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its member States.

B. Compliance mechanism

28. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. While there had been no submissions by Parties or referrals by the secretariat since the previous session of the Meeting of the Parties, one communication from the public had been received, which was admissible. He furthermore highlighted that the Compliance Committee stood ready to provide advisory support to interested Parties. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report and thanked the Committee for the work done.

29. Turning to the issue of Compliance Committee membership, the Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to Mr. Merab Barbakadze (Georgia), Mr. Akos Fehervary (Hungary) and Mr. Dmytro Skrylnikov (Ukraine), outgoing members of the Compliance Committee, for their professional support to the Committee's work.

30. The Chair presented nominations for the membership of the Committee, noting that there were currently three vacant places available and only two nominations had been received before the formal deadline set out in decision I/2 on the review of compliance (see ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1). That situation had led to one seat remaining vacant until the next session of the Meeting of the Parties. The representative of the European Union and its member States thanked the outgoing members and expressed his support to both new candidates. Taking note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its member States, the Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus the following new members to the Committee: Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, nominated by the Republic of Moldova, and Ms. Tina Janjatovic, nominated by Serbia.

VI. Development of the Protocol

31. Turning to the item on development of the Protocol, the Chair noted that several documents had been developed on the subject matter, including: the Report on the outcomes of the survey on the experiences in implementing the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2020/4), the Report on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6), including a possible approach for revising annexes I, II and III

(ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6/Add.1) and an accompanying document with Comparative analysis of different international reporting obligations related to annexes I, II and III of the Protocol on PRTRs (PRTR/WG.1/2019/Inf.2).¹⁴ Furthermore, the following documents prepared by the Compliance Committee were also relevant to the development of the Protocol: the Synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and overview of the progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/10) and Systemic issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and recommendations on how to address them (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6/Add.2).

32. The representative of the European Union and its member States spoke in support of the adoption of draft decision IV/2 on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/14). The representative of Switzerland said that it was critically important to modernize the Protocol by means of amendment, and welcomed the efforts made towards that goal as reflected in the Report on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2019/6). In that context, the representative of Switzerland also welcomed draft decision IV/2 on the development of the Protocol, which would ensure that the Protocol remained an up-to-date instrument for transparency. A representative of the European ECO-Forum said that many improvements could be implemented right away by Parties. The representative of Kazakhstan supported the initiative for developing the Protocol and thanked OECD and UNITAR for their technical assistance, as well as national experts and non-governmental organizations. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland thanked the Bureau and secretariat for the work and looked forward to participating in discussions.

33. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided by the representatives of the European Union and its member States, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European ECO-Forum. It then adopted draft decision IV/2 on the development of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/14) by consensus.

VII. Programme of work and operation of the Protocol

A. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021

34. The Meeting of the Parties 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 on contributions received between 31 August and 15 October 2021.

35. A representative of the European Union and its member States thanked the secretariat for the reports, stating that the comprehensive assessment kept the work on track and promoted the work of the Protocol at the international level. A representative of the European ECO-Forum thanked all those who had supported the work and the common goals to be achieved in the intersessional period.

36. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statements by the representatives of the European Union and its member States and the European ECO-Forum. It also warmly thanked Parties for their financial and in-kind contributions and expressed great appreciation for in-kind contributions provided by partner organizations. Furthermore, the Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding.

¹⁴ Available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/seventh-meeting-working-group-parties-protocol-prtrs>.

B. Future work programme for 2022–2025

37. Turning to the future work programme for 2022–2025, the Meeting of the Parties considered 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).

38. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its member States in support of the work programme and highlighting that the Protocol played an important role in supporting Parties in their implementation of many Sustainable Development Goals. The representative of the European ECO-Forum wished to propose an amendment to the draft document. The proposal was not supported by Parties. The Chair explained that the draft document had been open for comments and possible revisions for a long time and the draft had been approved by the Working Group of the Parties at its eighth meeting (Geneva, 16 and 18 December 2020).¹⁵ The Chair concluded that the statement of the European ECO-Forum would be noted in the meeting report and made available online. The Meeting of the Parties then adopted draft decision IV/3 on the Protocol's work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/13) by consensus.

39. The Meeting of the Parties further reiterated its requests that documents for meetings of the Protocol's governing and subsidiary bodies, as well as reports of the global round tables on PRTRs organized under the auspices of the Protocol, be processed, translated and published by the Division of Conference Management and made available in the three official languages of ECE without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources.

40. The Meeting of the Parties also requested that any required publications in accordance with activities under the Protocol's work programme, for example, activities E and G,¹⁶ be processed and translated by the Division of Conference Management into the three official languages of ECE and publications related to the Sustainable Development Goals be processed and translated by the Division of Conference Management into all six official languages of the United Nations without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources and made available in electronic and hard copy forms.

C. Financial arrangements

41. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties introduced draft decision IV/4 on financial arrangements under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/11). The major issues for consideration by the Parties were whether the scheme of contributions should be mandatory or voluntary, whether the United Nations scale of assessment should be taken into account, and whether the amount of a minimum contribution should be increased. The representative of Switzerland advocated for a sustainable and predictable financial mechanism under the Convention and the Protocol, with a mandatory scheme of contributions based on the adjusted scale of assessment of the United Nations. The representatives of the European Union and its member States and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland expressed support for a financial scheme with voluntary contributions, adding that no contributing Party should pay less than \$1,000 per year. The representative of Switzerland said that, although no agreement could currently be reached regarding the scheme of contributions, it was important that the option to discuss financial arrangements remain on the agenda for the next session of the Meeting of the Parties and, in a spirit of consensus, supported the preceding statements.

42. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statements by the representatives of the European Union and its member States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and adopted draft decision IV/4 on financial arrangements as amended at the meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.4) by consensus.

¹⁵ ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2020/2, para. 39 (c).

¹⁶ Activity E covers awareness-raising and promotion of the Protocol and its interlinkages with other treaties and processes while activity G covers technical assessment of provisions of the Protocol.

VIII. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau

43. The Chair presented nominations for the membership of the Bureau. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure,¹⁷ the Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus Mr. Tone Kvasič (Slovenia) as Chair and Ms. Enkeleda Shkurta (Albania) and Mr. Alex Radway (European Union) as Vice-Chairs. The following members of the Bureau were also elected by consensus in accordance with rule 22 (1) (b) of the rules of procedure: Ms. Marie-Rose van den Hende (Belgium), Mr. Eduard Hlavatý (Czechia), Ms. Teresa Palomar (Spain) and Mr. Bohdan Papusha (Ukraine).

44. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the appointment by the European ECO-Forum of Mr. Christian Schaible to attend the meetings of the Bureau as an observer invited by the Bureau, in accordance with paragraph 3 of decision I/1.

45. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden), Ms. Ulrike Schöler (Germany), Ms. Lesya Karnaukh (Ukraine), Mr. Nebosja Redzic (Serbia), and Mr. Roland Ritter (Switzerland), outgoing members of the Bureau, for their work.

IX. Date and venue of the fifth ordinary session

46. The Meeting of the Parties decided to hold its next ordinary session in 2025 and mandated the Working Group of the Parties to consider at its next meeting a possible date and venue for the fifth ordinary session.

X. Review and adoption of decisions of the session

47. Considering the results of the preceding agenda items, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the decisions and major outcomes presented by the Chair at the session (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.5)¹⁸ and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report on the fourth session incorporating the adopted outcomes and decisions.

48. The representatives of the European Union and its member States and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made statements expressing their appreciation to the secretariat for the successful organization of the meeting.

49. In closing, the Chair thanked all participants, present online and in-person, for their positive spirit and constructive discussions, as well as the interpreters, technical team and secretariat for their support. The Chair then closed the fourth session.

¹⁷ See ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/1, annex.

¹⁸ The unedited texts of decisions that were amended and adopted at the meeting and the list of decisions and major outcomes, as adopted at the meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/CRP.5) are available on the web page for the meeting (in-session documents tab).