



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 August 2022

Original: English

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

Compliance Committee

Twelfth meeting

Geneva, 1 March 2022

Report of the Compliance Committee on its twelfth meeting

Introduction

1. The twelfth meeting of the Compliance Committee under 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) took place, in virtual format, on 1 March 2022. Seven of the eight Committee members were present at the meeting: Mr. Stéphane Bernaudon (France), Ms. Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov (Republic of Moldova), Ms. Tina Janjatovic (Serbia), Mr. Juan Luis Martín Ortega (Spain) (Chair), Mr. Gor Movsisyan (Armenia) (Vice-Chair), Ms. Azemine Shakiri (North Macedonia) and Ms. Kristina Tekić (Croatia). Mr. Fritz Kroiss (Austria) did not attend.

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

2. Mr. Martín Ortega (Chair) opened the meeting and the Compliance Committee adopted its provisional agenda (ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2022/1), agreeing to postpone to an as yet undetermined date the hearings to discuss the substance of communication PRTRPCC/C/2020/1 (Ukraine), originally scheduled under item 3 of the provisional agenda. The Chair noted that, in the context of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, Ukraine was under attack, including Kyiv, where people were spending long periods of time in underground shelters to escape from bombing. Consequently, it was not possible to hold any meaningful discussion; neither was it possible for the representatives of the communicant and of the Party concerned to confirm their presence in advance of the meeting. In the interests of fairness and due process, the hearings were therefore postponed. The Committee also took note of the revised meeting timeline as presented by the Chair.¹

¹ Available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twelfth-meeting-protocol-prtrs-compliance-committee>.

II. Introduction of and solemn declaration by new Committee members

3. The Committee took note of the appointment of and welcomed the following new members of the Committee: Ms. Iordanov, Ms. Janjatovic and Ms. Tekić. The new members read out the solemn declaration, which they had signed and submitted to the secretariat in advance of the meeting (see ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/2, annex, para. 10).

III. Submissions, referrals and communications

4. The Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat that there had been no submissions, referrals or communications since the Committee's eleventh meeting (Geneva (hybrid), 22 October 2021).

IV. National pollutant release and transfer registers in the European Union member States

5. The Chair recalled that, at its ninth meeting (Geneva (online), 28–29 April 2021), the Committee had invited Finland to send a response to the Committee's considerations and advice by 31 January 2022. All correspondence, including the latest response letter of Finland, had been made available on the Committee's website.²

6. The Committee considered each answer submitted by Finland with a view to assessing whether the Party had addressed issues of potential non-compliance identified by the Committee. Having discussed the matter, the Committee concluded that, by establishing a web-based pollutant release and transfer register service with search functions entitled "FINPRTR", Finland had addressed major issues highlighted in the Committee's advice. At the same time, noting that work to improve "FINPRTR" was ongoing, the Committee invited Finland to provide the Committee with further updates once the remaining planned measures had been implemented, notably by 1 February of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The Committee also agreed to cease its work on draft findings on the subject matter. Lastly, the Committee expressed its appreciation to Finland for its constructive cooperation on the matter.

7. In addition, based on information received through 2021 national implementation reports and the synthesis report,³ the Committee decided to send initial letters – similar to that addressed to Finland – to Estonia, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia with questions in order to clarify the matter and, as needed, to provide in due course its advice to the Parties concerned pursuant to paras. 14 (b), 40 (a) and 40 (e) of the annex to decision I/2 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1).⁴ The Committee agreed that such letters should be sent by the Committee's Chair on behalf of the Committee to the national focal points of the Parties concerned and made available on the Committee's website. The Committee appointed Ms. Janjatovic, Mr. Movsisyan, Ms. Shakiri and Ms. Tekić as curators.

V. Lessons learned from the third reporting cycle concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

8. The Compliance Committee continued its deliberations on the lessons learned from the third reporting cycle concerning the implementation of the Protocol, initiated at its eleventh meeting. The Chair highlighted different options that the Committee might consider to further improve reporting by Parties and address specific issues of reporting on implementation of the Protocol.

² See <https://unece.org/env/pp/protocol-on-prtrs/protocol-bodies/cc/correspondence>.

³ ECE/MP.PRTR/2021/10, para. 15.

⁴ ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/2, annex, paras. 14 (b) and 40 (a) and (e).

9. The Committee agreed to identify possible improvements required for the upcoming fourth reporting cycle.

VI. Adoption of the outcomes of the meeting

10. The Committee adopted the meeting's outcomes as presented by the Chair at the meeting and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate the adopted outcomes. The Chair closed the meeting.
