

Decision 2022/4

Conclusion of the review of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, and the path forward

The Executive Body,

Recalling its decision 2019/4 to initiate the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012 (ECE/EB.AIR/144/Add.1), and decision 2020/2 on the plan for undertaking the review of the Protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, pursuant to its article 10 (ECE/EB.AIR/146),

Recalling also the objectives of the Protocol, as specified in its article 2, and the long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for 2020–2030 and beyond (decision 2018/5, annex),¹

Noting the report of the Working Group on Strategies and Review on its sixtieth session (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/128),

Welcoming the draft report prepared by the Gothenburg Protocol review group on the review of the Protocol, as amended in 2012 (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/3), its accompanying documents² and the inputs provided by subsidiary bodies to inform the review,

1. *Recognizes* that, despite emission reductions achieved by Parties as a result of introducing measures to address Protocol objectives, adverse effects on human health, ecosystems and materials continue to occur;
2. *Also recognizes* that increased efforts to further reduce emissions are necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the Protocol, including considering the development and implementation of new and updated measures;
3. *Further recognizes* that there are benefits to be achieved from synergies with climate and energy policies and that additional efforts outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region could further strengthen outcomes;
4. *Acknowledges* the need for more Parties to the Convention to ratify and implement the Protocol to increase its effectiveness;

¹ Available at <https://unece.org/decisions>.

² Scientific information for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/4); Technical information for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/5); Review of the flexibility provisions to facilitate ratification and implementation (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/6); Cost of inaction (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/7); Assessment report on ammonia (ECE/EB.AIR/2021/7); Barriers to ratification and implementation of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, and potential solutions (informal document for Executive Body's forty-second session); Synergies and interactions with other policy areas, Potential options for addressing methane as an ozone precursor under the Air Convention and [Task Force on Techno-economic Issues] background informal technical document for the review of the Gothenburg Protocol for industrial processes (informal documents for sixtieth session of Working Group on Strategies and Review); Non-technical and structural measures (informal document for Executive Body's forty-first session); Outcomes of the informal meeting of the Heads of Delegations to the Working Group on Strategies and Review (informal document for Executive Body's forty-second session); Considerations for ammonia relevant to future review of the Gothenburg Protocol and Draft guidance document on prioritizing reductions of particulate matter so as to also achieve reduction of black carbon (informal documents for fifty-eighth session of Working Group on Strategies and Review); Report of the Executive Body on its forty-first session (ECE/EB.AIR/148).

5. *Notes* that, in addition to reduced emissions of nitrogen oxides, volatile organic pollutants and methane within the ECE region, global methane reductions are needed to further reduce ground-level ozone in the ECE region;
6. *Decides* that the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, has been completed and adopts the final report on the review contained in document ECE/EB.AIR/150/Add.2;
7. *Requests* the subsidiary bodies to make appropriate proposals for the development of the 2024–2025 workplan in response to the conclusions and the next steps itemized in the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012;
8. *Recognizes* the need to further address the conclusions and next steps outlined in the review report and requests the Working Group on Strategies and Review to develop options for next steps and make recommendations on appropriate policy responses;
9. *Decides* that an ad hoc group of experts should be convened by the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review. The tasks of the ad hoc group are to include:
 - (a) Development of policy options to address the conclusions of the review, including consideration of the option of a revision of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, and options for addressing conclusions related to the technical annexes, and including recommendations for next steps and future work;
 - (b) Sharing the above-mentioned policy options with the Working Group on Strategies and Review for input in preparation for and at sessions of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in 2023, and, in the event of only one such session being held, making available a first draft of the ad hoc group's report through the secretariat to the national focal points for their input at the latest by the end of spring 2023;
 - (c) Further elaborating the policy options duly taking into consideration the input received;
10. *Invites* Parties to the Convention to nominate experts with experience in the work of the Convention to participate in the ad hoc group of experts by providing their names and contact information to the secretariat by 13 January 2023;
11. *Requests* the Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review, together with the ad hoc group, to report to the Executive Body at its forty-third session, to enable the Executive Body to give due consideration to the proposed options and in order to take appropriate action, which could, if appropriate, include a decision to launch a formal negotiation process.