

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range  
Transboundary Air Pollution

**Bureau of the Executive Body**

**Meeting**

8 September 2021, via videoconference

### **Report of the meeting**

#### **I. Attendance**

*Bureau members:* Ms. Anna Engleryd (Sweden, Chair), Mr. Sergey Vasiliev (Russian Federation), Ms. Elizabeth Nichols (United States of America), Ms. Jennifer Kerr (Chair of the Working Group on Strategies and Review), Ms. Laurence Rouil (Chair of the EMEP Steering Body), Ms. Isaura Rabago (Chair of the Working Group on Effects) and Mr. Manfred Ritter (Chair of the Implementation Committee)

*Observer:* Ms. Susanne Lindahl (European Union)

*Not present:* Mr. Richard Ballaman (Switzerland)

#### **II. Updates on the seventh joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects**

The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body and the Chair of the Working Group on Effects noted the key organizational aspects, in particular, an increased number of interpretation slots arranged for the joint session. They listed the main points in the session agenda with the discussion on the contribution of scientific bodies to the Gothenburg Protocol review taking a major part of it.

The Chair of the WGE asked Sweden to inform participants of the Task Force on the Forum on Monday afternoon under agenda item 6. The Chair of the Executive Body noted that the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland would make a presentation on that topic, whereas she would inform the session of the recent meetings under the Convention.

The secretariat noted that representatives of 7 Parties in the EECCA region had registered for the session. It invited the Chair of the WGSR to participate in the session and to present the main outcomes of the fifty-ninth session of the WGSR.

The Chair of the WGE informed the Bureau of the change in the host institution of ICP IM from Finland to Sweden, and that the issue would be discussed during the session under the item on financial and budgetary matters. The secretariat noted that decision 2002/1 would have to be amended in this relation and a new MoU would need to be signed. The secretariat informed the Bureau of a possible change of the host institution of ICP Vegetation: as had been informed by the United Kingdom, the contract with the

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology would expire in March 2022, and there would be a tendering process opened.

### **III. Draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Executive Body**

The secretariat briefed the Bureau about the organizational arrangements for the session, the agenda of the meeting and the status of preparation of pre-session documents and decisions for adoption by the Executive Body. The final version of the provisional agenda would be submitted to the editor at the end of the week following the Bureau meeting.

The Chair of the WGSR considered it challenging for her to attend the morning sessions in view of the time difference. The secretariat and the Chair of the Executive Body noted that a solution could be found through re-arranging respective agenda items.

The Bureau took note of the information that the session would be held in a hybrid mode and that the maximum occupancy of the conference room would be limited in line with COVID restriction. The Bureau concluded that online participation should be encouraged for the purpose of equity. At the same time, this should not prevent participants from remote time zones from attending the session in person. The Bureau member from the United States of America asked the secretariat to track physical attendance of meetings and to inform the Bureau accordingly.

With respect to the draft updated emission reporting guidelines, previously included in the list of pre-session documents, the Chair of the EMEP Steering Body noted that the request for an update should come from national representatives rather than from the Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections. She added that the issue would be discussed at the joint session, and in case an official request was made, the Executive Body would be informed accordingly.

The Chair of the Executive Body presented the draft mandate of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Air Pollution developed by Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Bureau welcomed the proposal and thanked the authors. The Bureau member from the United States of America, the observer from the European Union and the secretariat provided their comments on the document. The United States of America and the European Union noted that they would send their detailed comments in writing so to ensure finalization of the proposal for its submission as an official document for the EB session.

### **IV. Preparation of the 2022-2023 workplan for the implementation of the Convention**

The Bureau discussed the draft 2022-2023 workplan compiled by the secretariat based on the inputs by subsidiary bodies. The Chair of the EMEP Steering Body pointed to a challenge in making distinction between activities to be included in the workplan, and those covered by the mandates which are standing activities of the subsidiary bodies. The Chair of WGE noted that for some scientific groups including their activities in the

workplan was a pre-requisite for obtaining funding. She also noted the need to recognize in-kind contributions by Parties adding respective information in the financial document.

The Bureau noted that the workplan item on the guidance document on non-technical measures appeared twice and should only be kept in the policy section. The observer from the European Union recalled the delegation of Turkey raising the issue at the previous meetings of the Executive Body of including Turkey in capacity-building activities. The secretariat noted that, besides the regular opportunity to participate in meetings of scientific task forces, experts from Turkey were also invited to one of the capacity-building events organized online by the secretariat. The Bureau also provided comments on draft workplan items 2.1.1(b), 2.1.2(c) and 2.1.8(b) and (c).

The Bureau discussed the list of official meetings in 2022-2023 and the estimation of additional costs provided by the secretariat for the organization of two additional sessions of the WGSR in 2022-2023. The Bureau member from the Russian Federation and the observer from the European Union raised their concerns about the share of the secretariat staff costs in the overall budget. The Bureau member from the Russian Federation did not support the idea of organizing two additional meetings of the WGSR. Several Bureau members expressed a need for two WGSR meetings from 2023 and onward when negotiation on the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol is expected to take place. The observer from the European Union and the Chair of the WGSR noted the need for more detailed information to support the request for additional resources and thus to allow Parties to make an informed decision. They suggested that trade-off options be explored.

The secretariat explained the change in the scope of the secretariat support during the last decade and the need for additional resources in order to continue to maintain this support or increase it. It also reminded the Bureau that the use of the UN regular budget, which the Convention was relying on, was being under increased scrutiny and that the flexibility to absorb unplanned expenses for organization of additional events had been considerably reduced. The Bureau agreed to have a special meeting to discuss the issue of financing the secretariat.

## **V. Date and time for the next meeting**

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting dedicated to the issue of financing at the end of October or the first week of November 2021. The exact date would be agreed upon and communicated at a later stage.

## **VI. Other business**

The Bureau welcomed Ms. Francesca Bernardini, newly appointed Head of Transboundary Cooperation Section of the ECE Environment Division.

The secretariat informed the Bureau that the issue discussed at the previous meeting concerning the funding of scientific centres under the Convention and a perceived risk of conflict of interest had been resolved and closed, as, in accordance with the analysis

provided by the UN Office of Legal Affairs the existence of a potential conflict of interest was not confirmed. The concerned individuals had been duly informed and the contracts with the centres had been established. The observer from the European Union insisted that questions regarding the implementation of EB Decisions (e.g. funding of centers, elections of officials) should be brought to the attention of the Parties of the Executive Body as the correct platform for solving such issues.