

Decision 2023/5

Launching a process to revise the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, and to address other conclusions of its review

The Executive Body,

Recalling its decision 2022/4¹ on the conclusion of the review of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012, and the path forward,

Recalling also the fundamental principles of the Convention, the objectives of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, as specified in its article 2, and the strategic priorities of the long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution for 2020–2030 and beyond,²

Recognizing the Convention's contribution towards addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution,

Recognizing also the importance of maintaining momentum to ensure further progress on addressing the conclusions of the report on the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012,³

Noting that the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, is complex and that progress towards ratification and implementation may be hampered unless new flexibilities and approaches are introduced to address existing barriers for current non-Parties,⁴

Recognizing the importance of an integrated multi-pollutant/multi-effect approach to reduce air pollution, including the consideration of linked environmental policy concerns such as climate change and biodiversity,

Acknowledging that global methane reduction (in addition to methane, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compound control in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region) will be needed to reduce ground-level ozone in the ECE region,

Noting the report of the Working Group on Strategies and Review on its sixty-first session (Geneva, 4–6 September 2023) (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/130),

Having considered the document entitled Options to address the conclusions of the review of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012 (ECE/EB.AIR/2023/9) and the recommendations contained therein, including the summary tables in accompanying informal document No. 4,

1. *Decides* to initiate the process to revise the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, in order to address the conclusions of the report on the review of the Protocol;
2. *Also decides* that the revision process will include consideration of, inter alia:
 - (a) New emission reduction commitments for the pollutants currently covered by the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012;
 - (b) Potential revisions to the technical annexes to the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, including with regard to their scope and level of ambition;

¹ ECE/EB.AIR/150.

² Decision 2018/5, annex, available at <https://unece.org/decisions>.

³ ECE/EB.AIR/150/Add.2, paras. 90–91.

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, references to current non-Parties shall be construed to mean Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012.

- (c) How to deliver further reductions of black carbon emissions;
 - (d) Whether and how to address methane emissions;
 - (e) How to achieve additional ammonia emission reductions;
 - (f) New flexibilities, and other approaches to better facilitate ratification and subsequent implementation by current non-Parties to the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012;
 - (g) Overarching, collective risk-based target(s) to reduce harmful effects to health and to ecosystems, including biodiversity loss in the ECE region;
 - (h) How to achieve integrated approaches among climate, energy and air policies.
3. *Urges* current non-Parties to actively participate in discussions to revise the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, with the aim of ensuring that any revisions take into account the different circumstances of current non-Parties and facilitate ratification by those countries;
4. *Requests* the Working Group on Strategies and Review to begin work to revise the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, at its sixty-second session, and to report on its progress to the Executive Body at its forty-fourth session;
5. *Also requests* the Working Group on Strategies and Review at its sixty-second session to develop a plan, including timelines, to guide its work in revising the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, based on a draft plan to be developed by the Chair of the Working Group in advance of the session, as well as on views submitted by Parties;
6. *Decides* to include two meetings of the Working Group on Strategies and Review in the calendar of meetings starting in 2025 to accommodate the revision process, and that the calendar includes two meetings every year until the end of negotiations, subject to availability of resources;
7. *Encourages* Parties in a position to do so to consider hosting an informal meeting between the sixty-second session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review and the forty-fourth session of the Executive Body, to make progress on the negotiations to revise the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012;
8. *Requests* the Working Group on Strategies and Review, as part of the process to revise the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, to work to address barriers to ratification and implementation of the Protocol, including through consideration of, inter alia, step-wise approaches to commitments and ratification, sector-based approaches, a focus on key sectors, restructuring of the technical annexes, replacement of annexes with guidance documents, or combinations thereof, and to continue discussions with non-Parties;
9. *Requests* the subsidiary bodies to ensure that activities in their workplans include relevant work for continued progress on meeting the objectives of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, and prioritize work that supports the revision process;
10. *Decides* to take action to enhance capacity-building, awareness-raising and cooperation within and beyond the ECE region considering the efficient use of resources, including by:
- (a) Calling on Parties to the Convention to provide voluntary contributions and bilateral technical assistance, such as for emission inventory improvements, emission projections, air quality monitoring networks and support for action plans, to build capacity in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the countries of the Western Balkans and Türkiye;
 - (b) Requesting the secretariat, in consultation with non-Parties and the Working Group on Strategy and Review Bureau, and depending on financial contributions from Parties to the Convention, to develop a programme of action that identifies needs for resources and gaps in capacity, and to report to the Executive Body at its forty-fourth session;
11. *Aims* to conclude the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol, as amended in 2012, by the forty-sixth session of the Executive Body, unless decided otherwise.