



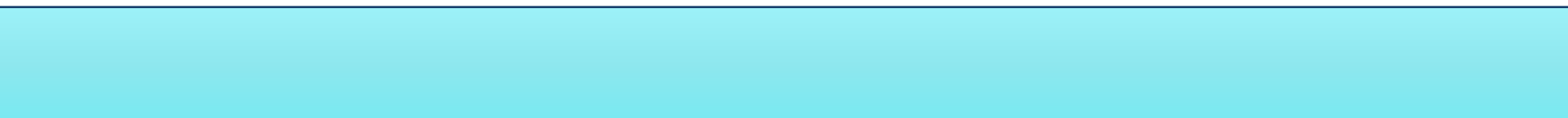
UNECE's Air Convention Gothenburg Protocol Revision

May 2024

Working Group on Strategies and Review, 62nd session

Policy Options for Addressing Methane

Presented by the Chairs of the EB and WGSR



Background

- Reducing transboundary ozone in the UNECE region is an **objective of the Protocol** (Article 2.1).
- **Scientific evidence** from the 2016 Scientific Assessment and its Policy Response (2017/3), and results from the **Global Methane Assessment (UNEP 2021)** establishes a strong link between methane emissions and ground-level ozone formation and its impact on health and the environment.
- **GPG Review:**
 - Para 90 (i) “Global CH₄ reduction (in addition to CH₄ and NO_x/VOC control in the ECE region) will be needed to reduce ground level O₃ in the ECE region.” *Reaffirmed in EB Decision 2023/5*
 - Para 90(h) “additional action is needed in the agricultural sector (NH₃ and CH₄)...gas flaring (BC and CH₄) and landfills (CH₄)...”
 - Para 91(f) “Continue scientific work and policy discussions on CH₄ and consider potential action to achieve methane reductions to reduce O₃”

Addressing methane as an ozone precursor

- Methane as an ozone precursor is currently addressed under the Convention
 - TFHTAP: hemispheric transport of ozone
 - TFTEI: mitigation technologies
 - TFRN: co-mitigation of methane and ammonia
 - TFIAM/CIAM: emission scenarios and optimization
- Create synergies and avoid duplication
- *See “Background documents to support the plan for the revision of the GP, as amended in 2012” (WGSR62 inf doc, May 2024)*

Continued discussions on Methane

- Scientific evidence reiterated in TFIAM and TFHTAP presentations at this meeting:
 - To tackle tropospheric ozone increases, reducing CH₄ emissions inside and outside the UNECE region are necessary
 - HTAP and Policy Brief para 23 / Fig. 10: ozone reduction potential (CLE vs LOW until 2050) is 1/3 by UNECE NO_x/NMVOC, 1/3 for non-UNECE NO_x/NMVOC, and 1/3 global methane
 - Therefore, we as CLRTAP community have to continue discussion on potential ways how to address methane as an ozone precursor, possibly under the Air Convention

Key Considerations

- **Timing**
 - Short-, medium-, long-term actions (selected and/or combined)
- **Geographical Scale and Ambition**
 - Larger scale / lower ambition vs. narrow geographical scope / higher ambition
 - Potential co-benefits for addressing NH₃ emissions from agriculture
 - International cooperation and coordination with other international initiatives
 - Voluntary commitment approach (e.g. BACA)
- **Outreach** to complement Convention work with actions in non-UNECE region, including coordination with climate/agriculture/energy institutions
- **Emissions reporting** synergies with UNFCCC & Arctic Council Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane

Menu of options for addressing methane

(Para 77 of 2022/5, Technical information for the review of the GP)

- (a) Maintaining current activities and taking no additional action (status quo)
- (b) Supporting the Global Methane Pledge
- (c) Adopting CH₄ national emission reduction targets or optimized national/regional reduction commitments
- (d) CH₄-specific emission limit values for specific activities
- (e) Compiling, reviewing and improving CH₄ emission information
- (f) Setting minimum requirements for monitoring and reporting data
- (g) Developing guidance documents and/or a report on recommendations for CH₄ emission reduction measures or best practices

Options to address the conclusions of the review to the GP, EB Decision 2023/2

- Para 15(c) Expanding the scope of the Protocol to include requirements on other ozone precursors, in particular CH₄ – a number of options are available to address CH₄ in a revision of the amended GP.
 - (i) Adoption of national emission reduction targets/optimized national/regional CH₄ reduction commitments, which could be binding or non-binding, collective or individual.
 - *New commitments-based option*
 - *Supporting/overlapping with the GMP, collective CH₄ reduction goals, specific sector CH₄ targets*

Options to address the conclusions of the review to the GP, EB Decision 2023/2

- (ii) A new technical annex on CH₄ (and/or an integrated annex for agricultural emissions) could potentially be addressed by a separate EB Decision and thus, ratified separately.
 - *New commitments-based option unless focused on guidance documents only*
 - *CH₄ ELVs for certain activities could be included in the annex*
 - *Could include different requirements by sector, a new annex including ELVs, BATs and guidance documents on best practices, sector-focused approaches such as guidance for monitoring and reporting of data for the oil and gas sector could be considered*

Options to address the conclusions of the review to the GP, EB Decision 2023/2

- (iii) Compiling, reviewing and improving CH₄ emissions information
 - *This is an information-based option that requires coordination with other bodies.*
 - *Need to request EMEP/WGE/TFTEI/TFRN to extend work/add to the workplan*
- (iv) Quantifying the benefits of current global efforts to reduce CH₄ emission on ozone concentrations
 - *This is an information-based option to improve understanding of the air quality, human health and ecosystems benefits of reducing CH₄ as an ozone precursor beyond what has already been included in the Global Methane Assessment (UNEP, 2022).*

Capacity Building

- EB Decision 2023/5 “Decides to take action to enhance capacity-building, awareness raising and cooperation within and outside of the ECE region considering the efficient use of resources...”
- This could include a voluntary approach (e.g., BACA) or other capacity-building efforts to reduce transboundary ozone, including methane.
- Approach 4 in 2023/2 includes additional details on the capacity-building, awareness raising and cooperation approach.
- Further discussion is needed with TFICAP.

Next Steps

- WGSR Recommendation to address Methane per EB Decision 2023/5
 - First / minimum step: adopt the timing to address methane in the plan for revision
- Informal meeting in Leuven, Belgium 21-24 October 2024
 - Annotated agenda will be sent out by the Chairs this summer
 - Main topics: Gothenburg Protocol revision, including new flexibilities and non-party inclusion, how to address methane, ammonia, and black carbon emissions, emission reduction commitments, technical annexes, target-setting, and integrated approaches among climate, energy, biodiversity and air policies, WGSR recommendations follow-up
 - Secretariat emails of 9 February & 25 April