

Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

Working Group of the Parties

Eleventh meeting

Geneva, 22 November 2024

DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹

as adopted by the Working Group at its eleventh meeting

Item 1. Adoption of agenda

The Working Group:

- a) took note of the information provided by the Chair and of the statement by the European Union and its member States;
- b) adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/1.

Item 2. Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs

The Working Group:

- a) took note of the information provided by the secretariat and of the statements by Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the European Union and its member States;
- b) welcomed the intention of the above non-Parties to ratify the Protocol;
- c) encouraged Signatories and other interested States to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

Item 3. Promotion and coordination

The Working Group:

- a) took note of the information provided by delegations;
- b) welcomed the joint efforts of UNECE and OECD in organising the fourth Global Round Table on PRTRs (Geneva, 20-21 November 2024) and their cooperation with UNEP and UNITAR;
- c) took note of the outcomes of the fourth Global Round Table on PRTRs and requested the secretariat to prepare, in cooperation with OECD, a formal report on the fourth Global Round Table on PRTRs in three UNECE languages for its submission to the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties;

¹ This document was not formally edited.

d) mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to explore an opportunity for organising a similar fifth joint event in the future;

e) took note of the information provided by representatives of OECD, UNITAR, UNEP, United Nations Environment Management Group, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Secretariat of the Barcelona Convention, Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, Secretariat of the Minamata Convention, Commission for Environmental Cooperation, other partner organizations, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights, at the fourth Global Round Table on PRTRs, and expressed appreciation to them and other partner organizations for support provided to furthering implementation of PRTRs systems thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol on PRTRs;

f) took note of the report by the Chair of the International PRTR Coordinating Group held at the fourth Global Round Table on PRTRs and welcomed the Group's important role for promoting awareness of PRTRs and synergy and coordination on this important topic at global level;

g) reiterated its call upon relevant partner organisations and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to cooperate closely where possible to create synergies to further the implementation of the activities related to PRTRs;

h) called upon Parties, other interested States, and organisations to continue global promotion of the Protocol;

i) recalled the outcomes regarding this agenda item adopted by the Working Group of the Parties at its previous tenth meeting (Geneva, 27-28 November 2023).

Item 4: Compliance and reporting mechanisms

The Working Group took note of the:

a) information provided by the Chair and the secretariat regarding reporting, and statements by participants;

b) document on Membership of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/5);

c) Report of the Compliance Committee on its fourteenth meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2024/2).

The Working Group agreed to assign: the Compliance Committee with preparing a synthesis report on the basis of national implementation reports, and the Bureau with overseeing this task.

Item 5. Preparations for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol

(a) Substantive preparations

(i) Agenda for the fifth session

The Working Group:

a) took note of the statements by participants and approved the Draft outline of the agenda for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/10);

b) mandated the Bureau to finalize the document and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for adoption at its fifth session.

(ii) Declaration

The Working Group:

a) took note of the Draft Declaration (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/11), and of statements and comments by participants and drafting proposals received from Lithuania, Switzerland, Ukraine and the Aarhus ECO Forum;

b) approved the document (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/11), noting that this document will be still subject to comments and revisions, and agreed that possible additional comments and revisions can be submitted to the secretariat by 15 January 2025;

c) mandated the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to finalize the draft Declaration in cooperation with the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption at the joint High-level Segment.

(iii) Development of the Protocol and proposal on modernizing pollutant release and transfer registers

The Working Group:

a) took note of the draft decision on furthering modernization of pollutant release and transfer registers, their global promotion and synergy (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/6) and of the statements and comments by participants and drafting proposals received from the European Union and its member States and the Aarhus ECO Forum;

b) approved the document, as amended at the meeting (PRTR/WG.1/2024/CRP.1), by introducing square brackets in section II, in paras 2, 4, 4(b), 7(b), 7 (e), 7 ((e) i, ii) and 7 (g). Noting that no consensus was reached on this text (in square brackets) which addresses a number of substantive issues, requested Parties and interested stakeholders to submit their possible comments for these parts of the text by 15 February 2025; and mandated the Bureau to finalise the document, taking into consideration the comments received, for submission and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session.

(iv) Programme of work for 2026–2029

The Working Group took note of the statements by participants, approved the draft decision on the work programme for 2026–2029 and mandated the Bureau to finalize it for submission and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session.

(v) Financial arrangements under the Protocol

The Working Group:

(a) took note of the document on future financial arrangements under the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/9) and of the statements and comments by participants;

(b) approved the document, as amended at the meeting, by introducing square brackets for the increase of the minimum contribution to \$ 2,000 (in para 1 (b)), and requested the Bureau to finalise the document for submission and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session.

(vi) Reporting requirements

The Working Group took note of statements by participants, approved the draft decision on the reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/7) and mandated the Bureau to finalize it for submission and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its fifth session.

(b) Hosting and preparatory timeline

The Working Group took note of:

a) information provided by the secretariat on the planned dates for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Aarhus MOP) and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (Protocol MOP) to be held back-to-back on 17-21 November 2025 (17-19 November: Aarhus MOP; 20 November 2025: Joint High-level Segment; and 21 November 2025: Protocol MOP);

b) preparatory timeline for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (PRTR/WG.1/2023/Inf.1).

The Working Group welcomed the offer by Lithuania to host the sessions, and requested the secretariat to further liaise with the Government of Lithuania on that matter.

Item 6. Implementation of the work programme for 2022-2025, including financial matters

The Working Group took note of:

(a) the Report on implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/3);

b) statements delivered by Chile, Guinea Bissau, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Türkiye, Ukraine and the European Union and its members States regarding plans for and the progress achieved in promoting PRTRs;

c) the Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2024/4) as well as information on contributions received between 1

October and 8 November 2024 (PRTR/WG.1/2024/Inf.2), and major recent trends regarding expenditures;

d) information on expected contributions and other information provided by delegations.

The Working Group:

a) noted with concern the substantial increase of technical, other operational and support costs (work area H) for the provision of secretariat administrative services;

b) expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its effective work in servicing the Protocol and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding;

c) reiterated its call on Parties to strive not to earmark large contributions for specific purpose as to facilitate the management of funds for implementation of the work programme in a balanced way;

d) called on all Parties to strive to increase their contributions at least by 43 % each, in view of the missing gap, as provided in the adopted work programme for 2022-2025;

e) expressed its concern with regard to the low number of pledges and urged Parties that did not contribute to proceed with the contributions for all missing years without any further delay;

f) called on Parties to proceed with their 2025 financial contributions as soon as possible this year;

g) encouraged those Parties that have neither contributed to the Protocol on PRTRs in 2024 nor 2025 to consider merging their contributions in one transfer;

h) in view of the growing interest from member States outside UNECE region, invited Parties to provide additional funding to support the global promotion of the Protocol effectively.

Item 7. Calendar of meetings

The Working Group took note of tentative schedule of relevant meetings planned for 2025 presented by the secretariat.

Item 8. Other business

No issues were discussed.

Item 9. Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting (as contained in this document) and requests the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and to incorporate the adopted outcomes and decisions in it.
