

## **Chair's report on the activities of the EECCA Coordinating Group in 2020**

The EECCA Coordinating Group (CG) (under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation) met twice in 2020 – in May and October (virtual meetings). Meetings were attended by representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Events were co-arranged and supported by the UNECE Secretariat.

Agenda was focused on the following topics:

1. Progress of work on air quality issues in member countries
2. Exchange of views on the upcoming revision of the Gothenburg protocol
3. Needs for further capacity-building and technical assistance

Both meetings were well-attended, agenda was adopted with no alterations.

### **1. On the progress of member countries**

Overall, countries showed continuous progress in their work regarding air quality regulation despite COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, in Belarus some of the provisions of the GP have been transposed directly into the national legislation, implementation issues, such as measuring and assessing VOCs emissions from enterprises, are being observed and analyzed for further improvement. New Maximum Allowable Concentration (MAC) standard for emissions of ammonia from stationary sources has been introduced. The NAP for the ratification of the HM and POPs protocols is currently being developed under the EU technical assistance project on AQ management and will be finalized in mid-2021. The ratification of the three latest protocols is still a priority, a timeline has not yet been set.

In Georgia, the National Parliament approved amendments to the Air Protection Law related to the CAFE Directive, namely the AQ regulation in zones and agglomerations, the HM measurement and the public information system. Furthermore, fines for air pollution emissions from stationary sources and for non-compliance with motor fuel standards on the market have been increased. A new rule on mandatory self-monitoring of emissions from stationary sources is under development. The Code of good practice for reducing NH<sub>3</sub> Emissions in agriculture has been prepared in national language. An action plan to reduce air emissions has been developed for one of the industrial cities “Rustavi”.

A concept and action plan related to the 2010/75/EU Directive on industrial emissions is currently under development in Ukraine. However, changes in government have slowed down adoption

procedures. The next step is to introduce and adopt the BAT concept. The workshops on BAT and VOC organized in 2019 have been very helpful in developing BAT plans (along with an ongoing BAT project supported by Germany). It is also planned to develop and implement technical regulations for combustion plants, including waste incinerators. The Government is considering the ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol.

In the Republic of Moldova, work on the AQ Law and the Industrial Emissions Law is carried out in accordance with relevant EU directives. In particular, provisions on the reduction of Sulphur content in fuels, on volatile organic compounds in paints and varnishes, on control of VOCs from petrol stations, and AQ monitoring standards have been transposed into national legislation. Due to the pandemic, the adoption of laws has been postponed and will be presented to Parliament in 2021.

Work is underway in Kazakhstan to ratify the EMEP protocol (tentatively, ratification is planned for 2023). Debates on the adoption of the new Ecological Code are continuing. Following the UNECE EPR recommendations to amend legislation and ratify the Protocols (with the support of a project with UNECE on legislative analysis and development of a NAP), ratification of the EMEP Protocol will be the first step.

In the Russian Federation, a Federal project on Action Plan for AQ Management for 12 of the most polluted cities, which includes quotas on emissions from enterprises is in progress. It includes an inventory of emissions from industrial sources, road transport and private housing. Data and will be used for modelling and strategic decision-making. First comprehensive results are expected to be presented in December 2020. The first stage of negotiations on the ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol has not been successful. The ratification is therefore postponed.

In Armenia, the air quality management policy framework is being built on the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States and the Republic of Armenia (of 24 November 2017). In 2020 the bill “On Amendments to the National Law on Atmospheric Air Protection” has been submitted to the National Government. The purpose of the law is to ensure the adoption of several by-laws, which will allow gradual implementation of the requirements in line with relevant EU directives. Technical assistance is needed to assess the socio-economic situation and the impact of the implementation of the GP provisions, as well as to develop an economic strategy for emission reduction.

State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on ecology and environmental protection has submitted its formal proposal for the ratification of the UNECE Air Convention to the national Government for consideration. Recently, the Cabinet responded with a request to conduct an in-depth analysis of the feasibility of ratification, including its impact on the economy. Internal consultations continue.

In Azerbaijan, the draft NAP developed with assistance provided by the UNECE Secretariat has been under review and plans are being developed for amendments to national legislation. As part of the environmental project in the Eastern Partnership, the OECD is supporting the improvement

of AQ, namely in setting emission limits. There is a plan to ratify the EMEP Protocol in 2021-2022.

## **2. Exchange of views on the upcoming revision of the Gothenburg Protocol**

Overall, it is expected that the upcoming revision of the GP will further complicate its implementation. Countries of the CG are still at different levels of understanding of the complexity and implementation issues with regard to the current GP (the 2012 revision). Forerunners, such as Belarus, and some of countries that have signed agreements with the EU are expected to share their experience on the practicalities of GP provisions implementation in the coming years. In the meantime, CG could propose the following:

- indicate in the revised text of GP that new measures and reporting provisions are of non-mandatory nature for new Parties;
- the time limitations for flexible mechanisms application should be removed from the text;
- introduce a new approach to ratification, e.g. staged ratification (annex by annex),
- include in the text of the protocol separate/specific conditions for the EECCA region (e.g. an special annex listing countries and respective obligations), as established for the US and Canada.

CG member countries reiterated their willingness to actively participate in the upcoming discussions of another GP revision, and underlined that the development of the GP should not further jeopardize ratifications by the EECCA countries due to overcomplications and unreachable level of ambition.

## **3. Capacity-building and the CG workplan for 2021-2022**

UNECE Secretariat kindly provided an update on capacity-building activities in 2020-2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the capacity-building work has been largely redirected to online meetings and workshops, postponed or reconsidered. The CG appreciates the Secretariat's efforts to implement planned activities despite existing limitations and donors' understanding, and ongoing support\*.

The CG-TFTEI joint session initially planned to be held in autumn 2020 has been postponed. The CG Chair is to coordinate with the TFTEI Chairs on a possibility of an online joint event to be held in spring of 2021. EECCA countries support well-established cooperation with the TFTEI and look forward to the next joint meeting.

Assistance related to capacity-building in countries of the CG is still required, and donors' support is very welcome.

---

\* CG sincerely thanks EU, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Russian Federation for their contributions

