

**Economic Commission for Europe**

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

Working Group of the Parties

**Tenth meeting**

Geneva, 27 and 28 November 2023

**DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES<sup>1</sup>**

**as adopted by the Working Group at its tenth meeting**

**Item 1. Adoption of agenda**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the Chair and of the statement by the European Union;
- ii) adopted the agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2023/1.

**Item 2. Status of ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the information provided by the secretariat and by delegations;
- ii) welcomed the intention of Cambodia and Guinea-Bissau to ratify the Protocol;
- iii) 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:

- i) took note of the information provided by panellists and thanked them for their presentations;
- ii) took note of the report by the Chair of the International PRTR Coordinating Group and welcomed the Group's important role for promoting awareness of PRTRs and synergy and coordination on this important topic at global level;
- iii) took note of the information provided by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and expressed appreciation to them and other partner organizations for support provided to furthering implementation of PRTR systems thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol on PRTRs;
- iv) took note of the statements by participants and called 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;

---

<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

v) reiterated its call upon governments to strengthen cooperation between experts dealing with the Protocol on PRTRs and those dealing with the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) and UNEP Conventions on Chemicals (BRS Conventions and the Minamata Convention on Mercury), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Global Framework on Chemicals (*successor to SAICM*), UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and other relevant agreements and programmes, as well as involved in projects carried out by international organisations as to ensure coordination at national level;

vi) reiterated its call upon Parties and stakeholders to consider implementation of the Protocol and Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in synergy;

vii) requested the Bureau with the support of the secretariat to explore opportunities for future cooperation with other relevant treaties and processes, including on the update of the Comparative analysis of different international reporting obligations related to annexes I, II and III to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR/WG.1/2023/Inf.3);

viii) called upon Parties, other interested States and organisations to continue global promotion of the Protocol including by making relevant guidance material available in all United Nations languages;

ix) reiterated its call upon the secretariat and interested States to translate the text of the Protocol in other United Nations official languages;

x) reiterated its call on Parties, other interested countries and organizations to promote PRTRs as a reporting tool for MEAs dealing with chemicals and for other relevant MEAs;

xi) encouraged in this regard the Protocol's national focal points to engage with national focal points of other relevant instruments and to jointly promote the use of PRTRs for reporting on international agreements, recalling in that context Sustainable Development Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production; the related OECD activities; the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol) to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) and the LBS Protocol's Amendment; the PRTR-related provisions of the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and of the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury; and the future treaty to end plastic pollution;

xii) encouraged Protocol's Parties to consider promoting the inclusion of provisions on PRTRs also in relevant future treaties, including a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment,<sup>1</sup> thereby promoting synergy and avoiding duplication of work.

#### **Item 4: Reporting and compliance mechanisms**

The Working Group took note of the:

i) information provided by the Chair and of the statements by participants;

ii) Report of the Compliance Committee on its thirteenth meeting (ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2023/2);

---

<sup>1</sup> For information on negotiations related to resolution UNEA 5/14 entitled "End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument", see <https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/inc-plastic-pollution>.

iii) information provided by the secretariat on the preparations for the 2025 reporting cycle.

### **Item 5. Subregional and national activities: achievements, needs and challenges**

The Working Group:

- i) expressed its appreciation to presenters for sharing valuable experiences;
- ii) took note of the information provided by presenters and other participants and expressed appreciation to Ukraine for progress achieved in establishing its PRTR system despite extraordinary circumstances due to war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine;
- iii) welcomed efforts by countries and organizations to promote establishment of PRTR systems and steps taken towards implementation of and accession to the Protocol;
- iv) encouraged Protocol's national focal points to promote, in cooperation with national focal points of other relevant treaties and organizations, the financial support, such as through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to countries that wish to establish PRTR systems of their own or as a group;
- v) recognized the importance of modernising pollutant release and transfer register systems;
- vi) recognized the usefulness of such activities in showing ways of how to optimize existing PRTR systems and design new PRTRs that address the Protocol's objective to establish coherent and integrated PRTRs in an efficient manner.

### **Item 6. Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (MOP-5)**

#### **(a) Substantive preparations**

##### **(i) Decision on promoting innovative approaches for modernizing pollutant release and transfer registers, their global promotion and synergy**

The Working Group:

- i) recognised the importance of modernising pollutant release and transfer register systems;
- ii) took note of the document on the Draft proposal on a possible decision on promoting innovative approaches for modernizing pollutant release and transfer registers, their global promotion and synergy (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2023/7) and of the statements and the comments provided by participants;
- iii) Agrees that possible additional written comments can be submitted to the secretariat by 1 March 2024 and requests the Bureau with the support of the secretariat to revise the document in light of the comments received and submit it to the eleventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties in 2024 for consideration and approval and its subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration. Draft will be made available to national focal points and stakeholders for comments prior to the next meeting of the Working Group.

##### **(ii) Work programme for 2026–2029**

The Working Group took note of the document on the work programme for 2026–2029 for the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2023/5) and of the statements made by participants, and requested the Bureau with the support of the secretariat to prepare a draft decision on the work programme for 2026–2029 for the Protocol for the next meeting of the Working Group, in line with the approach and indicative timeline outlined in the document, for consideration and approval by the Working Group and its subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration. Draft will be made

available to national focal points and stakeholders for comments prior to the next meeting of the Working Group.

### **(iii) Financial arrangements under the Protocol**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the document on future financial arrangements under the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2023/6) and of the statements by participants;
- ii) approved the document and requested the Bureau with the support of the secretariat to finalize it in the form of the draft decision for submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

### **(iv) Agenda for MOP – 5 and Declaration for High-level Segment**

The Working Group took note of the suggestions provided by the Chair regarding agenda for MOP – 5 and possible elements for the declaration to be prepared for a High-level Segment, and requested the Bureau to prepare a draft agenda for MOP-5; and draft elements for the declaration in cooperation with the Aarhus Convention’s Bureau, for its next meeting, for consideration and approval by the Working Group and their subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration. Drafts will be made available to national focal points and stakeholders for comments prior to the next meeting of the Working Group.

#### **(b) Hosting and preparatory timeline**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of information shared by the secretariat regarding related outcomes of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 26–28 June 2023);
- ii) took note of possible timing for the fifth session to be held in fall 2025;
- iii) welcomed the preliminary interest expressed by the Government of Lithuania to host the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs, and requested the secretariat to further liaise with the Government of Lithuania and other potential host countries on that matter;
- iv) mandated the Bureau to take the decision on the hosting and timing of the fifth session prior to the next meeting of the Working Group, as appropriate, and to report to the Working Group on the issue at its next meeting;
- v) took note of the 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).

### **Item 7. Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters**

The Working Group:

- i) took note of the Report on implementation of the work programme of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2023/3);
- ii) took note of the information provided by the secretariat on Self-evaluation of the activities serviced by UNECE under the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> See <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/EVALUA~1.PDF>

iii) took note of 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.1/2023/4) as well as information on contributions received between 15 August and 15 November 2023 (PRTR/WG.1/2023/Inf.2) and the brief by the secretariat on major recent trends regarding financial matters;

iv) expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding;

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

vi) 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.

#### **Item 8. Calendar of meetings**

The Working Group took note of the information provided by the secretariat on tentative schedule of relevant meetings planned for 2024.

#### **Item 9. Other business**

*[No issues were discussed]*

#### **Item 10. Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting**

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and to incorporate the adopted outcomes and decisions in it.

\*\*\*