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## Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant  
Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention  
on Access to Information, Public Participation in  
Decision-making and Access to Justice in  
Environment Matters

### Third session

Budva, Montenegro, 15 September 2017

## Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its third session

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## I. Introduction

1. The third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was held in Budva, Montenegro, on 15 September 2017. The meeting was organized back to back with the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, which was held from 11 to 13 September 2017. A Joint High-level Segment of the two bodies was held on 14 September 2017.<sup>1</sup>

### A. Attendance

2. The third session was attended by delegations from the following Parties and signatories to the Protocol: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

3. Delegations from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Guinea-Bissau and Kazakhstan were also present.

4. In addition, representatives of the following United Nations system organizations were present: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Other international organizations represented at the meeting included the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), along with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, the OSCE Mission to Serbia, the OSCE Presence in Albania, the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe and the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine.

5. Also attending the meeting were a number of judges and representatives of judicial institutions and review bodies from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia.

6. Representatives of Aarhus Centres, regional environmental centres, international financial institutions and business, professional, research and academic organizations were also present, as were representatives of international, regional and national environmental organizations. Many of the latter coordinated their input within the framework of the European ECO Forum.

### B. Organizational matters

7. Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden), Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, opened the meeting and informed participants that, with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations and reducing the amount of paper used, a list of decisions and outcomes adopted at the session would be made available to delegations electronically and

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<sup>1</sup> Documents for the meeting are available online from [https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/mopp3\\_docs.html](https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/mopp3_docs.html). Statements delivered at the meeting that were made available to the secretariat by delegates are also accessible from this web page.

then read out by the Chair, allowing for interpretation, prior to adoption. The adopted key outcomes and decisions would then be incorporated in the meeting report.<sup>2</sup> The Chair further recalled that the report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties had taken place at the joint High-level Segment,<sup>3</sup> and the Budva Declaration on Environmental Democracy for Our Sustainable Future (ECE/MP.PP/2017/16/Add.1-ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/2/Add.1)<sup>4</sup> had been adopted by consensus at that meeting.

8. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided by the Chair and adopted the provisional agenda for its third session (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/5).

## **II. Report on credentials**

9. The Meeting of the Parties had approved the report on credentials presented at the High-level Segment by Mr. Øyvind Hetland, the Vice-Chair of the Bureau, noting that there was a quorum for the purposes of elections and the adoption of decisions. In total, 30 Parties had submitted their credentials.

## **III. Status of ratification of the Protocol**

10. The secretariat reported that, since the adoption of the Protocol in 2003, 38 States had become signatories and there were currently 35 Parties. The Protocol had entered into force on 8 October 2009. Since the second session of the Meeting of the Parties (Maastricht, the Netherlands, 3–4 July 2014) Ukraine and Malta had become Parties — on 2 and 20 May 2016, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, a representative of Montenegro provided an update on the ongoing national process to ratify the Protocol.

11. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the Protocol. It welcomed the accession of Malta and Ukraine and the progress achieved by Montenegro in its national ratification process. Signatories and other interested States were encouraged to proceed with accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

## **IV. Promotion and capacity-building**

### **A. Coordination mechanisms and synergies**

12. The Meeting of the Parties considered the report of the second Global Round Table on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2016/7). The round table had been organized on 24 and 25 November 2015 in Madrid under the auspices of ECE and OECD and in cooperation with UNITAR and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Meeting of the Parties took note of the outcomes of the joint round table and mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to organize a third global event in the next intersessional period. The Meeting of the Parties further requested the secretariat to produce

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<sup>2</sup> For practical reasons, decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties are being issued in an addendum to the present report (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/6/Add.1).

<sup>3</sup> For practical reasons the report on credentials with regard to the Protocol's Parties is being included in the present report.

<sup>4</sup> Available from [https://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhusprtr/mop6mopp3\\_hls.html](https://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhusprtr/mop6mopp3_hls.html).

<sup>5</sup> Information on the status of ratifications is available from <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ratification.html>.

the report of future global round tables as official documents, so that they would be available in the three official languages of ECE without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources, and to submit them to the Working Group of the Parties or to the Meeting of the Parties, as appropriate.

13. The Chair then informed the participants about the latest informal meeting of the representatives of governing bodies of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements and the Committee on the Environmental Policy, held on 24 January 2017, and relevant discussions by the Bureau at its meeting in November 2016. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report.

14. The Chair of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group presented the Group's work as a global mechanism to facilitate cooperation on pollutant release and transfer registers, helping to avoid duplication, to identify possible synergies and to promote the potential of such registers. The Group's role as an information and learning platform and reporting tool for other international agreements and initiatives that dealt with related issues was highlighted and countries and organizations were invited to participate in the Group's work.

15. Representatives of international organizations also made statements regarding coordination and synergies to be found in working on pollutant release and transfer registers. A representative of UNITAR provided information on recent and planned projects involving registers, including on a project carried out in cooperation with UNEP and supported by the Global Environment Facility. Project activities promoted pollutant release and transfer registers as tools to report on priority chemicals, such as persistent organic pollutants, and to comply with reporting requirements of different multilateral environmental agreements — in particular the possible role of such registers under the Minamata Convention on Mercury — and also with regard to their usefulness in disseminating information on chemical releases during the life cycle of products.

16. A representative of OECD highlighted an important set of pollutant release and transfer register-related guidance documents published by OECD. The set included the "Guidance Document on Elements of a PRTR",<sup>6</sup> which proposed a global list of pollutants, common reporting thresholds and industrial sectors based on a comparison of existing national pollutant release and transfer registers and common elements across those registers. OECD encouraged countries to implement those harmonized elements when establishing or revising their register in order to foster comparison and cooperation between national registers. In addition, OECD had initiated a study on how to use register data to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, as the registers could play a key role in tracking such progress but an adequate methodology had yet to be developed.

17. In the following discussion a representative of the European Union expressed strong support for pollutant release and transfer register-related coordinating activities. In particular, the European Union appreciated the organization and format of the second joint Global Round Table on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and the report on it as a useful resource for countries and stakeholders. A representative of Switzerland highlighted the importance of making use of synergies when implementing the Protocol and shared environmental information systems.

18. Following the discussions on coordination mechanisms and synergies, the Meeting of the Parties:

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<sup>6</sup> OECD Environment Directorate, Part I, Series on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers No. 17 (ENV/JM/MONO(2014)33) (Paris, 2014) and Part II, Series on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers No. 18 (ENV/JM/MONO(2015)45) (Paris, 2015).

- (a) Took note of the report by the Chair of the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group;
- (b) Requested the secretariat to continue servicing the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group;
- (c) Took note of statements by representatives of countries and by international and regional organizations;
- (d) Thanked partner organizations for the support provided to furthering implementation of pollutant release and transfer register systems, thereby strengthening countries' capacities to accede to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers;
- (e) Called upon partner organizations and multilateral environmental agreements to cooperate closely and, where possible, to create synergies that furthered the implementation of projects and programmes related to pollutant release and transfer registers;
- (f) Reiterated its call upon Governments to strengthen cooperation between experts dealing with the Protocol and those dealing with the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and other relevant agreements, initiatives or programmes, as well as those involved in projects carried out by international organizations, so as to ensure coordination at the national level;
- (g) Reiterated its call upon Parties and stakeholders to consider implementation of the Protocol and shared environmental information systems in synergy;
- (h) Mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to continue global promotion of the Protocol;
- (i) Reiterated its request to the secretariat to ensure the availability of all official documents for meetings under the Protocol in all ECE languages, without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources.

## **B. Technical resources and subregional and national activities**

19. The Chair introduced the document by the secretariat on technical assistance and resources (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2016/12), which had been submitted to the Working Group of the Parties for consideration at its fifth meeting (Geneva, 23–24 November 2016). She then turned to subregional and national activities by presenting the key outcomes of the second subregional workshop “Get your Right to a Healthy Community” (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/7). The workshop had been organized in cooperation with the secretariat of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution from 19 to 21 September 2016 in Minsk and had aimed at building capacity for the ratification and implementation of the Protocol and the Convention in countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. A representative of Belarus pointed out that the workshop had been the first time cooperation between the Convention and the Protocol had been carried out within the context of a capacity-building workshop, and that it had been highly beneficial for workshop participants. Such cooperation also supported the promotion of the two instruments in the subregion, by fostering improved cooperation between national experts working on their implementation. The representative continued by outlining milestones in the current development of pollutant release and transfer registers in Belarus and in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

20. The representative of Croatia then informed the Meeting of the Parties about a recent improvement in the Croatian environmental pollutant register and its integration into the Croatian environmental information system.

21. A representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe reported on the Centre's capacity-building projects in the South-Eastern European region and expressed the Centre's readiness to continue supporting Parties and signatories in implementing and ratifying the Protocol.

22. As a final point, a representative of the European Union highlighted the importance of capacity-building activities related to pollutant release and transfer registers. The European Union was ready to work together with Parties, signatories, other interested States and different stakeholders to identify outstanding possibilities and priorities for capacity-building related to pollutant release and transfer registers and to discuss possible solutions for any difficulties identified. The European Union would also support bilateral and multilateral cooperation in that context.

23. Following the discussion on subregional and national activities, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcomes of the second subregional workshop "Get Your Right to a Healthy Community" held in Minsk;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to the secretariat of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the Belarusian Research Centre "Ecology" for their effective cooperation in the organization of the subregional workshop;

(c) Took note of the statements by representatives of Belarus, Croatia, the European Union and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe;

(d) Noted with regret that little progress had been achieved in establishing pollutant release and transfer register systems and in furthering ratification of the Protocol in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and called upon decision makers and policymakers of the countries of the subregion to make the necessary commitments to improve the situation;

(e) Called upon countries and partner organizations to support capacity-building activities so as to advance the establishment of pollutant release and transfer register systems and ratification of the Protocol.

24. Turning to the issue of technical resources, the Chair invited organizations to provide an update on their web platforms on pollutant release and transfer registers. The secretariat presented the upgraded PRTR.net website, which now included a good practices section and links to other relevant web sites. A representative of UNITAR announced that new functionalities, such as a stakeholder and expert forum, had been added to the existing web tool, PRTR:Learn, and that the name of the tool had been changed to "PRTR Platform". In addition, collaboration between UNEP and UNITAR had led to the development of Mercury:Learn, a platform that offered online training modules on how to identify and quantify mercury releases from different anthropogenic activities. Furthermore, OECD and UNITAR had developed a pollutant release and transfer register component for the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals Toolbox,<sup>7</sup> a problem-solving tool that enabled countries to identify the most appropriate and efficient national actions to address specific national problems related to chemicals management.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://iomctoolbox.oecd.org/>.

The pollutant release and transfer register component would take countries through a decision-making scheme on implementing such a register.

25. A representative of the European Environmental Bureau presented a recent research project that had examined various pollutant release and transfer register-related websites in Europe that were used by countries to share permitting and emissions data from facilities. One of the key outcomes of the study were recommendations on how existing industrial pollution web portals could be improved. Furthermore, the Irish industrial production web portal and the Norwegian register had been identified as good examples of how countries could make permitting- and emissions-related information available in a useful way.

26. A representative of the European Union encouraged participants to make use of the available electronic tools and materials and to actively participate in developing such tools and materials further.

27. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statements by representatives of the European Union, UNITAR and the European Environmental Bureau. It also welcomed the upgrade of PRTR.net implemented by the secretariat and requested the secretariat, OECD and UNITAR to continue working closely to ensure the effective use of PRTR.net and the PRTR Platform.

## **V. Reporting and compliance mechanisms**

### **A. Reporting mechanism**

28. The Chair of the Compliance Committee introduced the synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/10), which included an overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020.<sup>8</sup> The report was based on the information provided in national implementation reports<sup>9</sup> submitted by Parties. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties then introduced draft decision III/1 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/12). In that regard, the representative of Malta informed participants that the country planned to submit its national implementation report soon.

29. The representative of the European Union welcomed draft decision III/1, considering in particular that the timely submission of national implementation reports and a consultative and transparent process for their preparation was of the utmost importance. The European Union also supported the availability of the synthesis report in the three official ECE languages, and the representative reiterated the invitation to the Parties to provide voluntary translations of their national implementation reports.

30. A representative of the European Environmental Bureau observed that some countries were able to make data publicly available faster than others, underlining the importance of timeliness in making data available to the public. It could be that the long time lapses between countries receiving data and making it available to the public were partly the result of using old technology; if that were the case, with current technology a faster publication of emission data might be possible. In response, the representative of Switzerland explained that in his country, for instance, the administrative processes of data entry and its verification by the competent authorities at the different subnational and

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<sup>8</sup> ECE/MP.PRTR/2014/4/Add.1, decision II/2, annex.

<sup>9</sup> Please see <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/reporting2017.html> for national implementation reports in national languages and <http://www2.unece.org/prtr-nir/> for national implementation reports in the official ECE languages (English, French and Russian).



federal levels determined the time frame for the publication of pollutant release and transfer register data and not outdated technology.

31. Having considered the issue of reporting, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of information provided in the national implementation reports submitted by Parties, in the synthesis report on the implementation of the Protocol, including an overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020, presented by the Chair of the Compliance Committee, and in the statements made by Parties and non-governmental organizations on reporting;

(b) Recognized the need for timely submission of national implementation reports in order to ensure a good quality of the synthesis report and its timely submission for translation;

(c) Noted with regret that five Parties had not submitted their reports by the established deadline;

(d) Urged Parties that had not yet submitted their national implementation reports, namely, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia and Ukraine, to do so by 15 November 2017 at the latest;

(e) Adopted draft decision III/1 on reporting requirements, amending paragraph 6 to account for Parties that had since submitted their national implementation reports.

## **B. Compliance mechanism**

32. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities since the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, as well as on outcomes of the open round table on compliance matters held on 15 September 2017 in the margins of the third session in Budva. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report and thanked the Committee for the work done.

33. The Meeting of the Parties also endorsed the following draft documents prepared by the Compliance Committee, which the Working Group of the Parties had approved at its fifth meeting:

(a) Guidance for reporting on implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2016/6);

(b) Systemic issues concerning the implementation of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and recommendations on how to address them (ECE/MP.PRTR/WG.1/2016/5).

34. Turning to the Compliance Committee membership, the Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to Mr. Alistair McGlone, the outgoing Chair of the Compliance Committee, for his commitment and skilled chairmanship, and Ms. Barbara Rathmer, outgoing member of the Compliance Committee, for her professional support to the Committee's work.

35. The Chair presented nominations for the membership of the Committee noting that there were six vacant places available and only five nominations had been received before the formal deadline set out in decision I/2 on the review of compliance (see ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1). The representative of the European Union, recalling the issue of "particular instances" provided through decision I/2 (annex, para. 5), proposed to re-elect Ms. Nataša Kačić-Bartulović, the Committee's current member, for continuation of her mandate. Ms. Kačić-Bartulović had expressed her readiness to serve, and Croatia had

expressed its readiness to support her re-election. As Ms. Kačić-Bartulović had already been elected at the second session of the Meeting of the Parties, she met all the requirements set out in decision I/2. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statement by the European Union and then re-elected by consensus the following Compliance Committee members: Ms. Kačić-Bartulović, nominated by Croatia; Mr. Fritz Kroiss, nominated by Austria; and Mr. Gor Movsisyan, nominated by Belgium. It elected by consensus the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Nicolas Encausse, nominated by France; Mr. Juan Luis Martín Ortega, nominated by Spain; and Ms. Azemine Shakiri, nominated by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

## **VI. Programme of work and operation of the Protocol**

### **A. Implementation of the work programme for 2015–2017**

36. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report on the implementation of the Protocol's work programme for 2015–2017 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/8), the report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Protocol's work programme (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/9) and the list of recent contributions and pledges for the implementation of the Convention's and Protocol's work programmes (informal document AC/MOP-6/Inf.4-PRTR/MOPP-3/Inf.2). The secretariat informed the Meeting of the Parties of the two following errors in the report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programme that should be corrected:

(a) In section II, subsection A, table 3, last column (Adjusted contribution for 2017), the amount of the contribution received from the United Kingdom for 2016 should be “—” and the amount for 2017 should be \$46,512 (i.e., the current figures should be switched);

(b) In section III, table 8, the notation next to the subtotal of activities should read “A to H” (and not “A to G”).

37. A representative of Switzerland made a pledge as to the country's future contribution to the Protocol's activities. A representative of the European ECO Forum expressed regret that not many countries, and none from outside the ECE region, had ratified the Protocol. The Forum supported the principles of the Budva Declaration. Countries should take those principles very seriously into account, in addition to updating and extending the list of pollutants. The European ECO Forum was ready to provide assistance in that regard.

38. The Meeting of the Parties took note of a pledge provided by Switzerland and the statements by representatives of the European Union, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe and the European ECO Forum on implementation of the work programme. It also warmly thanked Parties for their financial and in-kind contributions and expressed appreciation to in-kind contributions provided by partner organizations. Furthermore, the Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding.

### **B. Progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020**

39. The Chair of the Compliance Committee reported on the Committee's activities related to the overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020, including the evaluation of the success of the Protocol and the development of relevant

indicators. Overall, Parties had achieved more in terms of implementing the Protocol than in lifting barriers to its ratification, expanding its membership beyond the ECE region or further developing the Protocol. That demonstrated that the Parties set priorities differently in terms of the implementation of the strategic plan. Regarding the evaluation of the success of the Protocol, there were no concrete indicators of success, nor was there ongoing work in terms of evaluation. Thus, he invited the Meeting of the Parties to mandate the creation of a proposal to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the Protocol, and, where appropriate, to build on the methodology already used at the international level. He also recommended that it be an inclusive and participatory process.

40. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report of the Chair of Compliance Committee on the Committee's activities related to the overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020, including the evaluation of the success of the Protocol and the development of relevant indicators. In that connection, it also took note of the following related reports prepared by the Committee:

(a) Overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/10, annex I);

(b) Evaluation of the success of the Protocol and the development of indicators (ECE/MP.PRTR/C.1/2017/2, annex).

41. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties reported that, following consultations, the Bureau had agreed to suggest to the Meeting of the Parties that it entrust the Compliance Committee with an evaluation of the Protocol and with the development of indicators, as outlined in the Committee's evaluation of the Protocol's success (see para. 41 (b) above). The Bureau had also considered that a survey should be organized in order to collect additional information not provided through national implementation reports.

42. In response, representatives of the European Union, Switzerland and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe expressed their general support for such an evaluation, but also evoked the need for an analysis of the added value and resource implications of such an exercise.

43. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the outcomes of the Bureau consultations and the statements by representatives of Switzerland, the European Union and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe regarding an evaluation of the Protocol's success. It then:

(a) Requested the secretariat to organize a survey among Parties in order to collect information on progress in implementing the strategic plan that had not been provided through the national implementation reports;

(b) Mandated the Bureau and the Working Group of the Parties to address in more detail the issue that Parties set priorities in different ways in terms of the implementation of the strategic plan, as identified by the Committee;

(c) Mandated the Bureau and the Working Group, taking into account the outcome of the survey, to further look into the focal areas of the strategic plan to identify where further action was needed to successfully implement the targets of the strategic plan;

(d) Requested the Bureau and the Working Group to prepare a possible future strategic plan for the period of 2021–2029, taking into account the overview of progress in implementing the strategic plan for 2015–2020 and the outcome of the survey and related work;

(e) Requested the Bureau to consider the added value and resource implications of a possible evaluation of the success of the Protocol and the development of relevant indicators referred to in the annex to the report of the Compliance Committee's fifth

meeting and, if appropriate, present a detailed proposal, for consideration by the Working Group at its next meeting.

### **C. Future work programme**

44. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties presented draft decision III/2 on the work programme for 2018–2021 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/13).

45. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the statement by the European Union delegation in support of the work programme and adopted draft decision III/2 on the Protocol's work programme for 2018–2021.

46. The Meeting of the Parties further reiterated its request that documents for meetings of the Protocol's governing and subsidiary bodies should be processed, translated and published by the United Nations Conference Services and made available in the three official languages of ECE without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources.

47. The Meeting of the Parties also requested that any required publications in accordance with activities under the Protocol's work programme, e.g., activities E and G, should be processed and translated by United Nations Conference Services in the three official languages of ECE and publications related to the Sustainable Development Goals should be processed and translated by United Nations Conference Services into all six official United Nations official languages without recourse to additional extrabudgetary resources and be made available in electronic and hard copy forms.

### **D. Financial arrangements**

48. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties introduced draft decision III/3 on financial arrangements under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (ECE/MP.PRTR/2017/11).

49. The delegation of the European Union announced a preference for a voluntary contribution scheme, and suggested to establish the minimum contribution at \$1,000. A representative of Switzerland, thanking the secretariat for its efforts in coping with the difficult budgetary situation, encouraged Parties to adopt a mandatory contribution scheme to ensure an efficient planning of work. The delegation of Norway also affirmed the country's preference for a mandatory financial scheme with stable, predictable and equitably shared funding. It then made a pledge on behalf of Norway to support the implementation of the Protocol's work programme, subject to endorsement internally by the competent authorities.

50. The Meeting of the Parties took note of statements by representatives of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland and agreed on a compromise text on financial arrangements. The revised text maintained the interim voluntary scheme of contributions with a minimum contribution kept at \$500.

51. The Meeting of the Parties adopted draft decision III/3 on financial arrangements as amended at the meeting.

## **VII. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau**

52. The secretariat presented nominations for the membership of the Bureau. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure,<sup>10</sup> the Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus Ms. Tina Skårman (Sweden) as Chair and Ms. Ulrike Schüler (Germany) and Ms. Marie-Rose Van den Hende (Belgium) as Vice-Chairs. The following members of the Bureau were also elected by consensus in accordance with rule 22, paragraph 1 (b), of the rules of procedure: Ms. Lesya Karnaukh (Ukraine); Mr. Alex Radway (European Union); Mr. Nebosja Redzic (Serbia); and Mr. Roland Ritter (Switzerland).

53. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the appointment by the European ECO Forum of Ms. Mara Silina to attend the meetings of the Bureau as an observer invited by the Bureau, in accordance with paragraph 3 of decision I/1.

54. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to the outgoing members of the Bureau for their work.

## **VIII. Date and venue of the fourth ordinary session**

55. The Meeting of the Parties decided to hold its next ordinary session in 2021 and mandated the Working Group of the Parties to consider at its next meeting a possible date and venue for the fourth ordinary session. In addition, the Meeting of the Parties mandated the Bureau and the secretariat to follow up on the matter.

## **IX. Review and adoption of decisions of the session**

56. Considering results of the preceding agenda items, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the session<sup>11</sup> and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report on the third session incorporating the adopted outcomes and decisions.

57. The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions, the interpreters and the secretariat for their support, the host country for an excellent organization of the event and closed the third session.

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<sup>10</sup> See ECE/MP.PRTR/2010/2/Add.1, decision I/1, annex.

<sup>11</sup> The unedited texts of decisions that were amended and adopted at the meeting are available on the web page for the meeting (in-session documents tab).