

**Chair's Summary of the
eighth informal meeting between representatives of the governing bodies of the
ECE Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the Committee of Environmental Policy**

held on 24 January 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Anna Engleryd, Chair of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

The key objectives of this meeting were to: (a) discuss follow-up to the 8th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, (b) share information on efforts to define the roles of the MEAs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (c) present updated information on activities jointly implemented by two or more MEAs; and (d) share information on broadening the scope of MEAs beyond UNECE.

1. Opening

The Chair opened the meeting. Mr. Marco Keiner, Director of the UNECE Environment Division, welcomed the participants (see annex I for the list of participants). He emphasized the importance of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The informal meeting between representatives of the governing bodies could serve as a model for a potential meeting of Chairs of the UNECE sectoral committees in the margins of the upcoming UNECE Commission Session (26-27 April 2017) to discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Follow-up to the 8th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

The Director of the UNECE Environment Division briefed the participants about the outcomes of the Batumi Conference. Governments of the pan-European region reconfirmed their commitment to take the lead in the transition to a green economy by endorsing the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and welcoming the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) consisting of over 100 voluntary commitments from 36 countries and organizations. Governments also reconfirmed their commitment to reduce air pollution, by endorsing the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA) and joining this initiative with over 85 voluntary commitments from 29 countries and organizations. The initiatives are still open for submission of additional voluntary commitments. Governments also acknowledged the work done under the Environmental Performance Reviews and reconfirmed their commitment to develop the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in support of a regular environmental assessment in the pan-European region. Also, the progress in implementing the Astana Water Action (AWA) was acknowledged. In addition, the High-level Meeting of Ministries of Education and of Environment organized during the Conference adopted the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.

A mid-term review of the progress in implementing the voluntary commitments will be carried out at a session of the CEP in 2018. The Chair of the Air Convention informed participants that a special panel discussion on Parties' experiences on how to implement the BACA commitments had already taken place at the 36th session of the Executive Body in December 2016.

It was suggested to present the BIG-E and BACA initiatives at the third session of the UN Environment Assembly to promote them further. Participants were informed that dedicated websites for the initiatives had already been established on the UNECE website. The Bureau member of the Water Convention suggested to revive the AWA with a new orientation towards SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation.

3. MEAs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; round-table discussion at CEP-22

Participants shared information on efforts to define the roles of the MEAs in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Specifically, in advance of the discussion under agenda item 4 of CEP-22, participants shared recent examples of the MEA's activities and experiences carried out thus far towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Participants specifically highlighted the following:

- Discussions as part of their Bureaux, governing organs or expert workshops on the linkages between the respective treaties and the 2030 Agenda;

- Recognition of the key role of the MEAs in implementing the 2030 Agenda by Parties / representatives of the governing organs;
- Plans to update the respective workplans and long-term strategies to include linkages to the 2030 Agenda.

Participants agreed to:

- Share respective workplans, long-term strategies and updates to other documents to highlight linkages with the 2030 Agenda;
- Engage further in commonly promoting the linkages of the MEAs with the 2030 Agenda, e.g. through promotional materials¹, video(s) and possible side event(s) at relevant meetings. The possibility of a joint side event at the 2017 UNECE Commission Session was considered.

4. Common activities and synergies among MEAs

The Chair presented updated information, collected by the secretariat, on activities jointly implemented by two or more MEAs since the last informal meeting of representatives of the governing bodies (Geneva, 26 October 2015) (see annex II). New joint activities undertaken were highlighted, such as joint workshops, side-events and joint development of guidelines. Participants agreed to continue to explore further cooperation opportunities and work to exploit synergies, building on the linkages between the respective treaties, in the future.

5. Information sharing on broadening the scope of MEAs beyond UNECE, promoting them and cooperating with other regions

The Air Convention reported that cooperation beyond the UNECE region was already ongoing on the scientific level, but that so far, Parties to the Convention have been hesitant to opening the instrument beyond the region. At the same time, the Convention agreed to pursue its approach to cooperating with other regions beyond UNECE:

The Water Convention informed participants that as of 1 March 2016 all UN Member States can accede to the Convention. A number of countries outside the UNECE are in the process of acceding to the Convention; more than 60 countries from outside the region have engaged in the Convention's activities.

The Espoo Convention secretariat reported that the amendment to open the Convention had entered into force; however, it still needs to be ratified by 10 countries that were Parties when the amendment was adopted for it to be operational. The Protocol on SEA was adopted as a global instrument. A number of countries in Asia had expressed an interest in an increased cooperation that could in a longer run lead to their accession to both instruments.

The Industrial Accidents Convention reported that the last COP (Ljubljana, 28-30 November 2016) could not agree on an amendment to open the Convention which had previously been negotiated and agreed by its Working Group on Development and decided to postpone further discussions on this amendment to the next COP.

The Aarhus Convention reported that the agreement is open to accession by any UN Member State. There is an ongoing advisory support to assist the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in developing a regional convention on access rights similar to the Aarhus Convention. Following a formal expression of interest in acceding to the Aarhus Convention by Guinea Bissau, the secretariat is providing advisory support to the country in its efforts to accede to the Convention.

The Protocol on PRTRs reported that the agreement is open to accession by any UN Member State. Promotion of the Protocol outside the ECE region is done through the work of the International PRTR Coordinating Group and Global Round Tables on PRTRs organised jointly with OECD in cooperation with UNITAR and UNEP.

¹ Pamphlets for all relevant SDGs, e.g. <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/efe/Batumi/Env4SDG1.pdf>

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held back to back with a meeting of the CEP. The meeting frequency should remain being once a year. Should there be a possibility to meet back-to-back with other meeting in which the representatives of the governing bodies will be represented, this will be considered.

7. AOB

Participants shared information about recent experiences with politically sensitive issues that came up in the meetings under the Conventions, such as political conflicts between member states and meeting delegations including representatives from disputed territories. With regard to the latter, the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention informed participants that it is guided by the relevant UN resolutions and is addressing possible issues at the time of registrations for meetings

Participants agreed to continue to share this type of information.

Annex I

List of participants



8th Informal Meeting of Representatives of Governing Bodies of MEAs and CEP Geneva, 24 January 2017

Start Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2017
Participants: 21

End Date: Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Governments

Sweden

Ms. Anna ENGLERYD

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

Chair of the meeting of the representatives of
the government bodies of the ECE, MEAs and
CEP

Valhallavägen 195
SE-10648 Stockholm
Sweden

Chairperson of the Executive Body to the
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air
Pollution

Phone: +46 10 698 10 60
Mobile: +46 768 864 389
Email: anna.engleryd@swedishepa.se

Ms. Tina SKÅRMAN

Senior Adviser
IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute

Chairperson of the Bureau of the Protocol on
Pollutants Release and Transfer Registers
(PRTR)

Box 530 21
SE-400 14 Göteborg
Sweden

Phone: +46-10-788 67 70 (direct)
Email: tina.skarman@ivl.se
Website: www.ivl.se

Slovenia

Ms. Jasmina KARBA

Secretary
Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning

Chair of the Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents

Dunajska Cesta 48
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

Phone: +386 1 4787 248
Fax: +386 147 87420
Email: jasmina.karba@gov.si

Netherlands

Mr. Edwin KONING (HoD)

Member of the Bureau of the Aarhus
Convention

Senior Policy Adviser
Directorate for International Affairs
Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment

Plesmanweg 1-6;
P.O. Box 20951
2500 EZ The Hague
Netherlands

Phone: +31 6 525 95 109

Mobile: +31 6 525 95 109

Email: Edwin.koning@minienm.nl

Serbia

Ms. Natasa DJURASINOVIC

Chairperson of the Bureau of the Protocol on
Water and Health

International Cooperation Group Manager
Ministry of Health

Nemanjina 22-26
11000 Belgrade
Serbia

Phone: +381 112 656 553

Mobile: +381 658 774 757

Email: natasa.djurasinovic@zdravlje.gov.rs

Switzerland

Ms. Sibylle VERMONT

Member of the Bureau

Deputy Head of Global Affairs Section
International Affairs Division
Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)

3003 BERN
Switzerland

Phone: +41 58 462 85 47

Fax: +41 31 323 03 49

Email: sibylle.vermont@bafu.admin.ch

UNECE Secretariat

Mr. Marco KEINER

Director
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 2370

Email: marco.keiner@unece.org

Mr. Sergiusz LUDWICZAK

Chief, Transboundary Cooperation Section
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 3174

Email: sergiusz.ludwiczak@unece.org

Mr. Zaal LOMTADZE

Chief, Environment for Europe and Sustainable Development Section
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
Avenue de la Paix 8-14
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 2388

Email: zaal.lomtadze@unece.org

Ms. Ella BEHLYAROVA

Secretary to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: + 41 22 917 2376

Fax: + 41 22 917 0107

Email: ella.behlyarova@unece.org

Ms. Tea AULAVUO

Secretary to the Espoo Convention and the Protocol
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22-917 1723

Email: tea.aulavuo@unece.org

Ms. Francesca BERNARDINI

Secretary to the Water Convention
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 1032

Email: francesca.bernardini@unece.org

Mr. Nicholas BONVOISIN

Secretary to the Convention on the
Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations,
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 1193

Email: nicholas.bonvoisin@unece.org

Ms. Franziska ILG-HIRSCH

Environmental Affairs Officer
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air
Pollution
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 24 80

Email: franziska.ilg@unece.org

Mr. Krzysztof OLENDRZYNSKI

Environmental Affairs Officer
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air
Pollution
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations,
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 2722

Email: krzysztof.olendrzynski@unece.org

Ms. Sonja KOEPEL

Environmental Affairs Officer
Water Convention
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 1218

Email: sonja.koepfel@unece.org

Ms. Angela SOCHIRCA

Environmental Affairs Officer
Environment for Europe and Sustainable
Development Section
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations,
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 2064

Email: angela.sochirca@unece.org

Ms. Carolin SANZ NORIEGA

Associate Environmental Affairs Officer
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air
Pollution
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14 avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 39 22

Email: carolin.sanznoriega@unece.org

Ms. Nataliya NIKIFOROVA

Environmental Affairs Officer
Protocol on Water and Health
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 19 27

Email: nataliya.nikiforova@unece.org

Mr. Theodore KOUKIS

Associate Environmental Affairs Officer
Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14, Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneve 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 3570

Fax: +41 22 917 0107

Email: theodore.koukis@unece.org

Mr. Kristof DOUÇOT

Environmental Affairs Officer
Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its
PRTR Protocol
Environment Division
United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe

Palais des Nations
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 917 1390

Email: kristof.doucot@unece.org

Annex II

TOWARDS ENHANCED COOPERATION OF UNECE MEAs: Informal guidance

Version of 25 January 2017

Annex:

Activities jointly implemented by two or more UNECE MEAs

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) provides the secretariat for the five conventions and their protocols – the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).² This “joint secretariat” forms the basis for many activities being organized jointly under two or more UNECE treaties. Examples are provided in the table below. See also the publication on UNECE MEAs in Central Asia.

Water and Industrial Accidents

A particularly significant example of formal cooperation is the UNECE work on Water and Industrial Accidents. The Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (Joint Expert Group) is a unique example of cooperation in an effort to promote synergies among the UNECE environmental treaties. It was established under the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions in 1998 with the aim to support cooperation on issues related to the prevention of accidental pollution of transboundary waters.

Since its establishment, the Joint Expert Group has produced several guidance documents on different subjects, e.g. safety guidelines for pipelines and for tailing management facilities, and has provided inputs to various documents, e.g. location criteria for the identification of hazardous activities. It has also promoted international response exercises on transboundary rivers through the organization of specific thematic activities; more such exercises are scheduled for 2017 and 2018.

Several workshops dealing with prevention of accidental water pollution have also been jointly organized in the framework of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions. Currently, the Joint Expert Group is elaborating guidance on fire-water retention.

Synergies between UNECE MEAs

<i>MEAs involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Water Convention and other MEAs	Publication: <i>Strengthening Water Management and Transboundary Water Cooperation in Central Asia: the Role of UNECE Environmental Conventions</i>	December 2011
Air Convention and other UNECE MEAs	Missions of the secretariat to Central Asian States to discuss the ways of strengthening the ratification and implementation of the UNECE MEAs with particular focus on the Air Convention	2012–2013
Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions	Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents	ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of guidance on fire-water retention	2017–2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two transboundary response exercises	2017–2018

² The Protocol on Water and Health is serviced jointly by UNECE and WHO/Europe.

<i>MEAs involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Dates</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development, testing and publication of a <i>Checklist on contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters</i>, with introductory guidance 	2011–2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: <i>Safety guidelines and good practices for Pipelines</i> (re-issue) 	May 2015
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication: <i>Safety guidelines and good practices for Tailings Management Facilities</i> 	May 2014
Water Convention, with Espoo and Industrial Accidents Convention and Protocol on Water & Health	National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Supply and Sanitation	ongoing
Industrial Accidents Convention, with Water Convention	Project: <i>Improving hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta</i>	2010–2015
	<i>Possible</i> follow-up project to complete joint contingency plan and support drafting of protocol among the countries	2017–2018
Protocol on Water & Health and Aarhus Convention	Publication: <i>Guide to public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health</i>	November 2013
Water and Aarhus Conventions	Conference: <i>Public participation and water resources management: where do we stand in international law?</i>	December 2013
Espoo Convention, Protocol on SEA and Water Convention	Assessment and reduction of transboundary impacts on transboundary watercourses and international lake (in the context of subregional coordination in the Baltic Sea)	2015
Espoo Convention, Protocol on SEA and Aarhus Convention	Effective public participation in SEA/EIA (in the context of subregional coordination in the Baltic Sea)	2015
Espoo and Aarhus Conventions (plus OSCE)	Joint capacity-building activities for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on public participation in decision-making, including to strengthen the capacities of national Aarhus Centres and the regional Aarhus Centres Network in the EIA and SEA processes (joint project proposal prepared but funding not available)	
Espoo and Aarhus Convention	Promotion of the Good practice recommendations on the application of the Espoo Convention to nuclear energy-related activities at the sixth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 10-11 February 2016)	2016
Protocol on SEA and Aarhus Convention	Joint meeting: <i>Public participation in environmental decision-making: focus on strategic environmental assessment</i>	October 2012
Industrial Accidents Convention and Protocol	Joint guidance: <i>Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects</i>	2015–2018

<i>MEAs involved</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Dates</i>
on SEA	Follow-up: finalization of publication and a seminar for exchanging experiences, possibly based on case studies	2017–2018
Industrial Accidents Convention, Protocol on SEA and Espoo Convention (plus UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management)	Joint workshop on safety and land-use planning on 13 April 2016, in the framework of the Working Group on Development (Industrial Accidents Convention) and Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment (for sharing of good practices on safety and land-use planning, plus development of guidance on safety and land-use planning,)	2015–2016
Air Convention and Protocol on PRTRs	Information exchange on air pollutant emissions from sources covered by the Protocol on PRTRs Second Subregional Workshop on the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers for countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia "Get your right to a healthy community" (19-21 September 2016)	September 2016
Protocol on SEA and Aarhus Convention	Publication: Recommendations on public participation under the Aarhus Convention and the Protocol on SEA to the Espoo Convention	November 2015
Industrial Accidents Convention and Aarhus Convention	Cooperation on the proposed amendment of Article 9 of the Industrial Accidents Convention with regard to strengthening its provision on public participation	2015–2016
Industrial Accidents Convention, Air Convention and Protocol on PRTRs (plus Subcommittee of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals)	Cooperation on aspects related to chemicals management, joint input to the UN system-wide Environmental Management Group / Issues Management Group on the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste, joint input to Inter-agency coordination meetings on sound chemicals management (organized in the framework of the IOMC), joint contribution to the UNEP SAICM International Conference of Chemicals Management, October 2015 (ICCM-4)	since 2015, ongoing
Water Convention and Espoo Convention	Preparation of a thematic assessment on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus under the Water Convention: EIA/ SEA is proposed as a possible nexus solution	Since 2015
Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health	Joint workshop planned on water scarcity	Dec 2017
Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs	Cooperation in view of the upcoming joint high-level segment of the Meetings of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and Protocol on PRTRs, which will consider a declaration on environmental democracy and sustainable development (Budva, Montenegro 14 September 2017).	2017

In addition, there is constant interaction between the Conventions and their respective Protocols, particularly the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on SEA, which share a Working Group on EIA and SEA, and the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health.