



International PRTR Coordinating Group

Ninth meeting

Wednesday, 8 October 2014, Santiago, Chile

REPORT¹

1. The meeting of the International PRTR Coordinating Group (ICG) was attended by representatives of the following countries and organizations: Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Spain, Sweden, United States of America and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Iñigo de Vicente-Mingarro (Spain), and serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

I. Opening and adoption of the agenda

2. The Chair opened the meeting with an introduction to the work of ICG and presented the provisional agenda². The agenda was then adopted by the participants as it was presented by the Chair.

II. PRTR-global-map update

3. The Chair presented an update to the PRTR-global-map and showcased individual PRTR websites which were linked to the map. The participants agreed that the map should be kept under continuous review in order to reflect any new developments.

4. In the following discussion on the global implementation of PRTRs, special emphasis was given to the status of PRTRs and PRTR development in countries which are Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention). The Chair reported that Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia had pilot projects for PRTRs. He specified that Morocco's pilot project involved four industries in the north of the country. The project's major aim was to test what would be the best approach to other similar projects in the future. The Chair also informed the Group that Turkey worked on PRTR projects in relation to the work under the Barcelona Convention's Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities and to the implementation of the relevant EU legislation.

5. Japan suggested that the map should be accompanied by a table, which would provide written information on the status of countries' PRTRs. The ICG proposed therefore to

¹ This document was not formally edited.

² Available under <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/prtr/intlcfgimages/about.html>

circulate such table amongst participants and other interested stakeholders, inviting them to add or revise information.

III. PRTR HOT-TOPICS

6. Participants addressed a number of the selected hot-topics as outlined in the below paragraphs.

7. With regard to lessons learned from reporting, Sweden explained that, on a national level it was evaluated for different PRTR-activities which pollutants had been reported. It was suggested that this exercise could also be performed on an international level. Furthermore, Sweden also informed the meeting that it had compared Swedish emissions/releases from PRTR/E-PRTR databases with those reported under the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution and with the aim to identify possible gaps in the datasets.

8. Finland described its procedure to use PRTR datasets for comparison with other datasets for reporting of emissions. It was said that such comparison was a common approach also used for E-PRTR.

9. The Chair brought to the attention of the participants the difficulty as well as the usefulness of comparing emission datasets collected in accordance with different national and international obligations.

10. In view of the combined use of datasets from PRTRs of different countries the Chair noted that it was necessary to:

(a) Address differences in measurement and calculation methodologies;

(b) Make use and develop “equivalence tables” for activities and substances as e.g. listed in annex I and II of the Protocol on PRTRs.

11. Japan explained that in order to take account of the current reporting, it had made an analysis on reported substances in 2010, based on the experience of seven years of reporting to the Japanese PRTR. Substances which until 2010 had not been reported were deleted or replaced with new substances. According to the delegate such assessment and revision of the list of substances will likely be repeated in two to three years.

12. In addition, the Japanese delegate mentioned that these changes also increased complexity of the task when comparing data across years and between PRTRs of different countries.

13. Spain informed the group that 115 substances were taken into account for reporting to the Spanish PRTR. The government currently carried out work to identify those chemicals that were commonly occurring in past reporting periods as emissions.

Furthermore, Spain noted that it was prepared to provide recommendations for those substances with quantitative limits to releases from specific facilities.

14. The USA, on the subject of assessing the quality of reported data, raised the question of whether an international PRTR data quality center would be needed to improve the overall quality of data and to facilitate exchange between governments on methods and methodologies.

15. On the issue of current PRTR related challenges, the US pointed to changes in the use of chemical substances by the industry and how to best account for these changes in the design of PRTRs; also the need was stressed to further encourage those countries currently working on implementing PRTRs to join groups like ICG and design their new PRTRs taking into consideration the comparability of data between PRTRs from different countries. Furthermore, countries should share detailed information on chemical substances that are part of their PRTR-related legislations as to monitor new developments in the global use of chemicals.

IV. Future Global round table – substantive focus

16. Based on the experience with the first joint Global round table (GRT) held in November 2013 in Geneva, the Bureau of the OECD TFPTR decided to organize a second GRT on PRTRs in cooperation with the UNECE Protocol on PRTRs. The Protocol's Meeting of the Parties, held 3 and 4 July 2014 in Maastricht, the Netherlands, also confirmed its willingness to convey a second GRT on PRTRs.

17. The ICG welcomed these decisions. After discussion, participants recommended to the Bureaux of the TFPTR and of the Protocol on PRTRs to consider the following:

a) To allow more time for interactive discussions rather than for presentations. In this regard the experience of organizing discussions in small thematic groups, as was done during the 2nd meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol (November 2012), was mentioned. The participants split into three groups, each covering specific topic and had opportunity to change groups at any time;

b) To focus the event on a specific sector of industry (e.g. textile or pharmaceuticals/green chemistry), with the possibility that representatives from these sectors will participate in the meeting;

c) To allocate sufficient time for bilateral exchange on challenges and good practices.

18. ICG also suggested considering the following topics:

- Examples/good practice (e.g. focus on the three elements: quality, reporting, and use of data);
- Next generation PRTRs: e.g. “knowledge-on-demand” and data visualisation;
- Combined use of PRTR systems;
- Tools and products based on PRTRs;
- How to support countries who intend to implement PRTR-systems.

V. Outcomes

19. The participants reiterated their commitments to coordination and synergies for the work on PRTRs. They furthermore decided on the following specific actions to further cooperation:

- The Chair of the ICG, with the support of OECD and ECE secretariats would prepare an explanatory note to the PRTR global map;
- The secretariat would make presentations delivered at GRT, TFPTR, and ICG meetings available from the PRTR.net;
- OECD secretariat would make published PRTR-related documents available to non-OECD member countries and interested stakeholders through its website;
- The secretariat would prepare a survey amongst participants of ICG in order to facilitate exchange of experiences during the next ICG meeting, on the following topics:
 - a) The need for and potential use of an international PRTR data quality centre;
 - b) Recommendations on priority chemicals and shifts in the use of different substances;
 - c) Designing emerging PRTR systems and the related legislation taking into consideration the global PRTR data.
- Upcoming meetings would further consider to continue discussion on:
 - a) Changes in the use of different chemicals by the industry. In particular, good practices on how PRTRs can better reflect developments in the use of chemicals;
 - b) Possibilities to foster harmonization between different PRTRs. In this context the ICG encouraged countries to develop their PRTRs with a view to comparability of data at the global level.

VI. Next meeting

20. It was agreed that the next ICG meeting would be organized considering preparations for the 18th meeting of the Task Force on PRTRs under OECD and the possible second Global round table event to take place in 2015 or 2016.
