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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP):
61st Session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (WGSR 61)
(Geneva, 4–6 September 2023)
- Statements by the EU and its Member States

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#), for information purposes, a compilation of agreed statements as delivered at the abovementioned meeting on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

**Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)
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- Statements by the EU and its Member States -

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda

The EU and its Member States too confirm again our full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The EU and its Member States reiterate our strongest condemnation of the unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Agenda item 2: Progress in the implementation of the 2022–2023 Workplan

– ***On the presentation/report by TFTEI***

We thank the TFTEI for the report and the information including the additional informal documents.

On the report on the review of annex VIII (mobile sources), the summary of information is generally very useful and this review report can in itself be a help to Parties who wish to raise their ambition level and cut emissions. The long section on the development on Euro 7 seems less relevant, given that this is very EU focused. It could be shortened considerably e.g. by a reference to the European Commission's impact assessment underpinning the Euro 7 proposal, where the different options are described and how they were developed. How to move forward on the protocol annex will however depend on the outcome of the EB43 discussions on the overall Gothenburg Protocol and notably the future balance between ratification barriers and higher ambition levels.

– ***On the draft guidance on measures to reduce methane from landfills and gas***

The EU and its Member States support the draft guidance. The holistic policy summary presented is thorough including, for example, useful analysis and reflection on biogas plant leaks. We thank the TFTEI for the swift work to submit a revised version taking into account our comments in a clear and good way. We propose to forward the revised version to the EB for adoption.

– ***On the draft guidance on shipping emissions:***

The EU and its Member States support the draft guidance and thank the TFTEI for the swift work to submit a revised version taking into account our comments in a clear and good way. We propose to forward the revised version to the EB for adoption.

– ***On the presentation/report by TFRN***

We thank the TFRN for the report and information. We note in particular the invitation to the WGSR to express our views on the opportunity and benefits of strengthening cooperation with other relevant MEAs and on the possible modalities for intergovernmental coordination on nitrogen policies. The EU remains committed to information-sharing and cooperation with other MEAs including on nitrogen pollution issues. Cooperation between TFRN and INMS is a good example, keeping in mind the different scope and mandate of these two separate platforms/bodies. Focus could be e.g. on promoting the existing and well-proven Air Convention knowledge resources in the global context.

– ***On the draft guidance on comitigation of methane and ammonia:***

The EU and its Member States support the draft guidance and propose to forward it to the EB for adoption with the comments we submitted in writing before this session.

We highlight in particular the following:

Notably in consideration of food supplements/additives, but also relevant to other aspects: the text might benefit from a brief reflection on the need for caution/verification of laboratory announced results by also testing real life performance. It is suggested that this could be included as a point within section F, on establishing a hierarchy of measures.

As with other recent guidance notes, there is a need for balance in presenting information on decarbonisation/GHG emissions alongside information on air pollution reduction; the text should be restructured to prioritise air pollution information, while still pointing to the synergies and co-benefits for the decarbonisation agenda.

– ***Regarding the informal document on a planned revision of the ammonia guidance***

Considering technical developments and knowledge progress since the adoption of the current ammonia guidance document, we agree that an update would be relevant and useful. Such an update should build on the existing framework and add new information where needed. An updated guidance should be based on well-established facts and emission reduction estimates from field testing, not only laboratory or theoretical estimates. The updated guidance should also, where relevant and appropriate, provide additional information on co-benefits / co-mitigation opportunities in line with the integrated approach and recent guidance on nitrogen management and the draft policy brief on co-mitigation with methane.. We encourage the TFRN to organise consultations with all Parties as part of the development of an updated guidance, considering the wide interest and significant policy impact of this document.

In response to the informal document posted for this session, we sent questions and comments in writing and we might submit additional comments, including in reply to the information received from the co-chairs in the session, by the 20 September deadline.

– *On the TFRN informal note on extensive livestock systems*

We will not discuss an EU internal legislative process in the WGSR. However, we take note of the comments by the Task Force co-chairs on definitions of extensive livestock systems in general, and agree that this may be interesting to consider in future steps depending on what the EB decides for the way forward on the Gothenburg Protocol.

– *On the presentation/report by TFICAP*

We thank the TFICAP for the report and information and congratulate the co-chairs on the successful organisation of the first meetings of the task force and the Forum. We are wondering whether the programme and next steps as presented on pages 7-8 of the report will also include work with *global organisations* (e.g. UNEP) to complement the work with regional organisations mentioned in the last bullet point and would be grateful for clarification about this.

– *On the presentation/report by TFIAM*

We thank the TFIAM for the presentation and take the opportunity to in particular thank Rob Maas for his work in the task force, including as its chair since 1994; and to welcome the incoming co-chair Simone Schucht who will take over as from 2024.

Agenda item 3: Policy options to address the conclusions of the review of sufficiency and effectiveness of the Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, as amended in 2012

The EU and its Member States thank the EGPOD for their excellent and hard work and for the presentation of results. We stress that we will not yet commit to a final option at this point in time but will share our tentative views and feedback. The final position of the EU and its Member States on the way forward will be settled for the decision at EB43.

– *On the updated options paper*

The EU and its Member States submitted comments on the 26 May version of the paper by 27 June. These comments have largely been well taken into account.

On the updated version circulated as an informal document, we have the following additional comments: the recommendations chapter is useful and clear. We note the recommendation to proceed with opening a revision procedure and will further consider the proposed list of items that could be covered in such a process, without committing to a final outcome of such negotiations.

In paragraph 57, it is not quite clear what is to begin at WGSR62. Consideration of a launch of a comprehensive revision will assumedly be discussed already at EB43 and within and among Parties informal work must start well before next WGSR session; the reference to WGSR62 as a starting point could perhaps be deleted or redrafted.

In paragraph 58, 3d bullet point the words “stricter emission requirements” and “more broadly” might need further clarification as the language is not very clear.

We also thank the EGPOD for the summary table including in revised version, this is useful to get an overview of main issues. The new qualitative comparison table shows options 2b and 3b as “similar” for several criteria such as level of effort and timeline; it is likely that option 3b would in fact take more effort and more time for the negotiations. It is also not clear why option 3b would “ensure more ratifications from the outset and faster entry into force”; on the contrary it might take longer time compared to amending an already well established and well known protocol.

Agenda item 4: Draft 2024–2025 workplan for the implementation of the Convention: policy-related aspects and elements

The EU and its Member States thank the WGSR Bureau, the task forces and the secretariat for the preparation of this draft work plan section. We stress that several of these work plan items will depend on the Executive Body decision in December 2023 regarding the follow-up of the Gothenburg Protocol and we will need to review them again in the EB following that discussion.

We generally support the current work plan proposal, with the comments sent in writing in advance of the session.

We would still be interested in confirmation from the TFRN about their capacity to perform the long list of proposed work items, as additional resources cannot be guaranteed. If not possible to implement all these items on existing resources, we would propose the following as main priorities:

- 2.1.3. Provide technical support on options to inform preparations for possible future updating of annex IX to Gothenburg Protocol
- 2.1.9. Examination of benefits and barriers to dietary change to reduce N air pollution, including co-benefits, possible scenarios and opportunities to overcome barriers
- 2.1.12. Assessment of technical and non-technical options for meeting Global Biodiversity Framework target 7, with special reference to N air pollution, including benefits of such action
- 2.2.1. Promotion of guidance documents, including those recently adopted
- 2.2.6. Continue revision of Guidance document for preventing and abating ammonia emissions from agricultural sources
- 2.2.8. Further elaboration on interactions between emissions of CH₄ and NH₃, and other N compounds, and potential for their co-mitigation from agricultural sources

Agenda item 6: Review of the rules of procedure for sessions of the Executive Body

We thank the ad hoc expert group and its chair for their excellent work on this report.

The EU and its Member States submitted comments on the interim report 22 June 2023. These comments have been well taken into account.

On the updated version, we have the following additional comments:

- Regarding hybrid meetings, this option is currently less relevant but may be required in the future. We note that this issue could also be treated as a matter for an EB decision. Our final position will be prepared following the input of the legal ad hoc group on this proposal
- Regarding length of terms of office, a simpler solution would be to leave rule 17 unchanged. We propose that the RRG reconsiders and/or simplifies this proposal, taking into account the potential discrepancy between the start and end of terms.
- Regarding elections of officers, the level of detail in the proposed new rule 17b seems disproportionate for the Rules of Procedure. It is not clear that we need such a detailed new procedure. We propose that the RRG reconsiders and/or simplifies the proposal.
- Regarding voting rules, this clarification proposal is relevant to forward to the legal ad hoc group for their opinion. The level of detail of the current proposal (specifying the English language alphabetic roll call order) may be superfluous. We propose that the RRG reviews and simplifies this proposal.
- Regarding the deletion of the reference to Rule 29 in Rule 21.6, making Rule 29 (decision making) also applicable to the other subsidiary bodies, we reiterate that the other subsidiary bodies are not decision-making bodies, but only agree on draft recommendations for the EB or agree on technical documents. Making rules for decision-making also applicable to WGSR, EMEP SB and WGE would further complicate / slow-down the policy preparation and science process and imply that also for the WGSR and EMEP SB we may need to come with credentials. So far we have been able to avoid coordination on science and technical issues within EMEP SB and WGE. This would potentially also have impact on the agreement of the adjustment applications (that we as EU wanted to maintain as a technical procedure). We therefore insist on removing this proposal.
- It is not clear why it would be necessary to repeat the wording of EB Decision 1998/3 as a new rule 30bis; it should be noted that such action would also change the way this procedure can later be amended. We propose to remove this proposal.

We remind in particular about the need to only bring forward well justified and needed proposals for the EB to consider. The Rules of Procedure should be a help and support to Parties for decision-making but should not unduly restrain or limit the Parties choices or possibilities to adapt to any given situation. If it is not a problem, we do not need to fix it.

We also note the lack of resources and high pressure on experts' time. To reduce stress and to use resources prudently, only hypothetical amendments likely to have consensus support should be passed on to the legal ad hoc group for analysis. We call on Parties to share information already now on proposals which they will not support, so these proposals can be removed from the list. Repetitions of rules already noted elsewhere (e.g. comment on the EB meeting frequency) are superfluous and should be removed from the file before submission to the legal ad hoc group.

From the EU side, we reiterate our strong objection to any introduction of regional representation on the Bureaux. We support the principle of taking due account to geographical and gender balance but this is not the same as Bureau members *representing* a certain geographical region or gender. Bureau members are elected on the basis of their individual capacity and expertise and their task is to act for the best interest of the Convention, not for the interest of their home region. This principle remains important to us.

Finally, in line with the comments submitted in writing in June and with the caveats just expressed, we do see merit in recommending the EB43 to launch a limited amendment exercise to ensure an update of those rules not fully clear or up to date, notably the rule on voting procedures.

Agenda item 7: Financial requirements for implementation of the Convention

We thank the secretariat for the information provided on estimated costs to support the work of the Air convention. The document contains lump sums for work items and is useful as an overview of total costs. It is, however, not very useful for understanding what the secretariat spends time on and what are payments to other parts of the UNECE. To be able to assess the secretariat's need of additional resources it would be interesting to know what the existing resources are spent on in more detail.

For example, the note implies that four full time staff members are required for the organisation of three annual meetings and in the follow up to decisions from two of these meetings. Can the additional tasks for these staff members be clarified as the tasks listed in table 1 do not seem to add up to four full time positions?

Some of the cost requirement estimates seem exaggerated, e.g. the proposal that resource mobilisation and contracting (Item 3.6 in table 1, assumedly the administrative work for the centres receiving Convention funding) requires another half-time staff member. Clarification or reconsideration of this would be appreciated.

The document also highlights work by the secretariat on the review of emission data (Item 4.2 in table 1). Can secretariat clarify the nature of their work on this issue; the bulk of the data review work being performed by CEIP?

Finally, at EB42 it was decided to restrict the secretariat's tasks during 2023 only, pending a long-term solution. If the secretariat still does not consider that they have the resources to carry out all their tasks we would welcome a proposal from the EB Bureau on the priorities for 2024 to be considered by Parties at EB43. We would also ask the EB Bureau to draw up a proposal for a long-term solution as soon as possible.

Agenda item 8: Election of officers

The EU and its Member States support the highly qualified nominees proposed and thank all of them for their willingness to serve as WGSR Vice-chairs.

Agenda item 9: Other business

– ***On the Saltsjobaden VII report***

The EU and its member States congratulated Sweden on the successful event organisation and thank the presenter for the report.

– ***On the International Clean Air Day event***

The European Union and its Member States welcome the initiative and the summary of the event.

