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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Council (Environment) on 21 October 2025 Resumed third session of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group (SPP OEWG 3.2) and subsequent Intergovernmental Meeting (SPP IM) to consider the establishment of a Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution (Punta del Este, Uruguay 14 – 20 June 2025) - Information from the Presidency and the Commission

Introduction

At the resumed session of UNEA 5, held in February-March 2022, Member States adopted [Resolution 5/8](#), which calls for establishing a new science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution. As envisaged in the resolution, this panel could support countries' efforts to implement multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other relevant international instruments, promote the sound management of chemicals and waste, and address pollution, by providing policy-relevant scientific advice. The panel could also further support relevant MEAs, other international instruments and intergovernmental bodies, the private sector, and other stakeholders in their work.

An ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the establishment a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution was established with a mandate to conclude its work by the end of 2024.

Establishment of the Panel

After 5 meetings of the ad hoc open-ended working group, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) was established at the Intergovernmental Meeting (IM), held back to back with the resumed 3rd session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (SPP OEWG 3.2), on June 20 2025 in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

Three decisions were adopted at the meeting; establishment of the panel, recommendations for consideration for the first meeting of the panel, and a decision for the interim period between the Intergovernmental meeting establishing the ISP-CWP that took place in June 2025 and the 1st Plenary meeting of the ISP-CWP that will take place in February 2026. The panel's primary objective is to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste and pollution prevention, with a focus on protecting human health and the environment. The decision on establishing the panel was agreed despite a few unresolved issues left for future discussions, including the focus on protection of human health and the environment and the reference to gender.

The panel will have a bureau with 2 representatives from each UN region, and a plenary as its decision-making body. Membership of the plenary will be open to all governments.

The EU/MS requested full membership for the EU as a Regional Economic Integration Organisation (REIO) and due to very challenging precedence in the context of science-policy panels (IPCC established in 1988 and IPBES with recurring point on membership of REIO), the accepted compromise was that Regional Economic Integration Organisations would receive a status of enhanced observers with rights to speak, reply, introduce proposals, and provide views, and the ability to support the implementation of the work programme of the Panel through financial support, but not ability to be elected to the Bureau of the Panel. A footnote in the foundational document was added indicating that this provision applies on an *interim* basis and that the Panel will decide by consensus on a resolution on the status of Regional Economic Integration Organizations in the Panel.

The panel will also have an Interdisciplinary Expert Committee (IEC), the size of which was not agreed upon, but it will comprise experts from each of the UN regional groups representing a wide range of expertise. The IEC will have a limited number of observers, and only bureau members will be allowed to participate as observers by invitation of the IEC chair. Details on the IEC remain to be agreed in the Rules of Procedure which are to be finalized at the 1st Plenary of the ISP-CWP.

Decision-Making and Financial Contributions

The operational principles uphold scientific independence and consensus in decision-making processes. Decision-making will involve voting on procedural matters and consensus on substantial matters. The chair will rule on whether a matter is procedural or substantial, and the rules of procedure may be amended by consensus. Financial contributions to the established Trust fund cannot come with conditionalities, cannot orient the work of the panel and cannot be earmarked for specific activities, unless otherwise decided by the plenary.

Next Steps

The first panel meeting is tentatively scheduled for 2 - 6 February 2026, preceded by regional and stakeholder meetings on 1 February 2026, in Geneva, Switzerland. All governments that participated in the Intergovernmental Meeting establishing the ISP-CWP became members, with the possibility to opt-out by December 8, 2025. ISP-CWP is to announce the procedure for governments to become members in the autumn of 2025 in order to secure participation in the first plenary meeting. The first plenary meeting is expected to continue its work to finalise how the panel should operate, including Rules of Procedure, process for determining the work programme, procedures for the preparation and clearance of panel deliverables, conflict of interest policy, and financing. The secretariat will communicate with members regarding the membership and the preparation of the first panel meeting. Members of the ISP-CWP have been invited to express interest to host the Secretariat of the ISP- CWP by 5 November 2025.