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#### INFORMATION NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Eleventh meeting of the Working Group 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 (PRTR WGP 11)  
(Geneva, 22 November 2024)  
- Statements by the EU and its Member States

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Delegations will find in the [Annex](#), for information, a compilation of statements by the EU and its Member States delivered during the eleventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (WGP 11).

**Eleventh meeting of the Working Group 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  
(PRTR WGP 11)  
(Geneva, 22 November 2024)**

**- Statements by the EU and its Member States**

**Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

Good morning, in this first intervention on behalf of the EU and its Member States, we would like to thank the Secretariat for having prepared this meeting and for providing the relevant documents in a timely manner. We would like to thank the Chair for his words of welcome and for his introduction too. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Interpreters. Your hard work is essential for the success of this meeting.

The European Union and its Member States agree with the agenda items as proposed and look forward to fruitful discussions and exchanges of views and an efficient, successful meeting.

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**Agenda item 2: Status of ratification of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers**

The European Union and its Member States express their gratitude to the Secretariat for providing updated information on this matter. In alignment with the objectives outlined in Article 1 of the Protocol on PRTRs, which emphasize maximizing public access to environmental data, encouraging public involvement in decision-making processes, and contributing to environmental pollution mitigation, it is imperative to expand the geographical scope of this significant international legal framework and reinforce its position as a pivotal multilateral environmental reporting mechanism.

Consequently, the EU and its Member States encourage additional ratifications, including from nations beyond the UNECE region that have already committed to other regional agreements concerning access to environmental information. We were glad to hear that several participants of this Working Group session and of the Global Roundtable expressed their intentions to establish PRTR systems or to ratify the Protocol. We also appreciate the efforts to implement the Protocol made by those countries that joined in recent years. We especially warmly welcome the presentation delivered by the delegation of Ukraine yesterday regarding the efforts they make to implement the Protocol during these difficult times.

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### **Agenda item 3: Promotion and coordination**

The European Union and its Member States extend their appreciation to the Secretariat and all collaborating organizations for disseminating information on relevant activities undertaken to promote the Protocol. In this regard, the EU and its Member States pledge to maintain their support for promotional and coordination efforts related to PRTRs, particularly in conjunction with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Environment Program, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and other organizations and stakeholders. We especially value the endeavours of the International PRTR Coordination Group in globally promoting the Protocol, as the Protocol could benefit from a more comprehensive perspective. The EU and its Member States suggest the Secretariat and other partner organizations to continue pursuing synergies, and commend the Secretariat's initiatives to establish connections with other treaties and conventions, as these actions will enhance the implementation of the Protocol.

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### **Agenda item 4: Compliance and reporting mechanisms**

The EU and its Member States thank the Secretariat and the Compliance Committee for the reports on their activities and take note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the next reporting cycle for the preparation of national implementation reports.

## **Agenda item 5: Preparations for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol**

### **(a) Substantive preparations:**

#### **(i) Agenda for the fifth session**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this document on the Agenda for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. The agenda, similarly to the fourth session, would cover all substantive areas of work under the Protocol, and address good practices, achievements, lessons learned, challenges, and obstacles in implementation. The proposed thematic high-level segment focuses on the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution) and its connection to human rights, sustainable development, and the environment covers complex, comprehensive topics indeed, with the focus on the role of the Aarhus Convention and the Protocol in addressing these critical issues. Effective public engagement, modernization of digital environmental information systems, and the role of access to justice in addressing these challenges are of great importance. The EU and its Member States can support the agenda as proposed.

#### **(ii) Declaration**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the joint Draft Declaration of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the PRTR to be held in autumn 2025. The EU and its Member States are presently in the process of consolidating their position and will deliver their proposals on the draft in a timely manner.

**(iii) Development of the Protocol and proposal on modernizing pollutant release and transfer registers**

The EU and its Member States are committed to the effective implementation of the Protocol's provisions and achieving its objectives. We are pleased to report that the EU has made significant progress in enhancing our legislative framework. The Industrial Emissions Portal Regulation, adopted in May 2024 and replacing the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, will further improve transparency in data reporting by collecting and disseminating information on the amounts of industrial pollutant releases, off-site transfers of waste and pollutants in wastewater, as well as the consumption of energy, water and relevant raw materials.

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Bureau for preparing the Draft Decision on Furthering Modernization of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, Their Global Promotion and Synergy, which is intended to be used by Parties and other interested States and stakeholders who wish to implement possible voluntary measures in order to facilitate implementation of decision IV/2. The overall objective and approach of the document captures the practices and good experiences in the development and implementation of PRTRs worldwide. In light of the progress and experience gained since the entry into force of the Protocol in 2009, the EU and its Member States welcome the intentions to look for ways to further the cooperation in this field. The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Parties to the Protocol and the Secretariat for the efforts made during the preparation of this document. We also recognise the pivotal role of the Working Group of the Parties in fostering the spirit of cooperation and collaboration among the Parties during the development of the document. The EU and its Member States would appreciate to have additional time for further internal discussions to finalise our position.

## **EU + MS reply to contributions from other parties and the Secretariat**

The EU and its Member States thank all of the distinguished delegates and experts for all of their comments. We will evaluate these comments and will further elaborate on our position during the following months.

(Agreed action if the Chair suggests to put the EU and its Member States drafting suggestions in brackets and postpone the discussion to MOP5: The EU and its Member States shall accept it. This will provide the EU+MS give us more time to further work on our position and take into account the comments expressed by other Parties.)

### **(iv) Programme of work for 2026–2029**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Draft decision on the work programme for 2026–2029 for the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. Concerning work areas, the European Union and its Member States endorse the recommendation to maintain the existing work areas as outlined in the current work programme. In terms of staffing and human resources, the EU and its Member States acknowledge the expected increasing charges associated with office rent, information technology, administrative services and rates for baseline staff costs at the United Nations. However, costs should remain within existing budget frameworks. The EU and its Member States can support the text as proposed.

#### **(v) Financial arrangements under the Protocol**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this draft decision on financial arrangements under the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. The EU and its Member States welcome the document and believe it provides a relevant basis for further discussions. The EU and its Member States acknowledge that the potential unpredictability of the funding could have an impact on the Secretariat's ability to carry out long-term planning regarding staff, and invite all Parties to ensure that financial contributions for a given calendar year are made by 1st of October of the preceding year, or at the latest in the first six months of the calendar year, so as to secure payment of staff costs for the smooth functioning of the Secretariat.

However, while recognizing the need to ensure that sufficient resources are available to implement the Protocol's work programme, we believe that the new minimum amount for the voluntary contribution suggested in the draft decision can have a significant impact on countries that are considering joining the Protocol, thereby hindering a wider geographical applicability of this important international legal instrument. Therefore, the EU and its Member States still support a financial scheme of voluntary contributions, as it stands now.

#### **(vi) Reporting requirements**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this guidance document on reporting requirements. The EU and its Member States fully agree that national implementation reports need to be submitted to the Secretariat in a timely manner. The EU and its Member States can support the draft decision as proposed.

**(b) Hosting and preparatory timeline**

The EU and Member States thank Lithuania for its interest in hosting the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and encourage the Secretariat to provide assistance for timely preparations.

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**Agenda item 6: Implementation of the Work Programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters**

(The Agenda item was split into two sections by the Chair during the meeting (work programme & financial matters). Therefore, the accepted statement also had to be split. )

Part1 - work programme:

The European Union and its Member States express their gratitude to the Secretariat for providing the report detailing Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025.

Part2 - financial matters:

The European Union and its Member States express their gratitude to the Secretariat for providing the report detailing financial matters. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States extend an invitation to all Parties to make appropriate financial commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the current program of work.



**Agenda item 9: Adoption of the decisions and outcomes of the meeting**

The EU and its Member States would like to express their gratitude to the Secretariat for the smooth organization of this meeting. We also thank the Chair of the meeting, the interpreters and all the panellists for their clear and very informative presentations.

We also welcome the results achieved with the aim to finalise all necessary preparations for MOPP5 in a timely manner.

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