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#### INFORMATION NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Eighth 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 8) (Geneva / virtual, 16-18 December 2020) - 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 eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs (WGP 8).

**Eighth 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 8)**  
**(Geneva/virtual, 16-18 December 2020)**

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

**Agenda item 1: Adoption of the agenda**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Since this is our first intervention at this meeting, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the timely submission of comprehensive meeting documents. We appreciate the work that has been undertaken in the preparation of the documents and the efforts to adapt the meeting to the current challenging circumstances. We would also like to thank the Chair for her introductory statement. The EU and its Member States can accept the proposed agenda as it stands.

We note that appropriate time is set aside for agenda item 6 on the Development of the Protocol. This is an important topic on which we would like to contribute positively and constructively – and where we would like to recommend a decision to be adopted at the fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

We look forward to a fruitful and efficient meeting.

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**Agenda item 4: Promotion and coordination**

**a) Coordination mechanisms and synergies**

The EU and its Member States believe that synergies with other organizations and Parties are important. Identifying synergies in implementing MEAs in other fields with the help of PRTRs should be regarded as highly important.

In this respect, we continue to support PRTR related coordination activities carried out in particular with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the international Co-ordinating group on PRTRs (ICG) and other organisations. This cooperation opens up new perspectives and is helpful in defining areas for improvement, as well as for further development of PRTRs.

## **b) Global promotion of the Protocol**

The EU and its Member States support work to promote the Protocol globally, and in particular, cooperation with the partners concerned such as the OECD and UNITAR, and counting on the role of the International Co-ordinating Group on PRTRs (ICG) since it could contribute from a more transversal perspective.

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### **Agenda item 5: Compliance and reporting mechanisms**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Compliance Committee and the Secretariat for their continuous support in implementing the PRTR Protocol. We support the valuable work of the Compliance Committee and welcome the information that the Committee has not received any submissions by Parties concerning compliance by other Parties or submissions by Parties concerning their own compliance as well as referrals by the Secretariat.

The EU and its Member States take note that the Committee requires more information in order to further explore the issue regarding the need for European Union Member States Parties to the Protocol to introduce national PRTRs.

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### **Agenda item 6: Development of the Protocol**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Bureau for preparing the draft Report on the outcomes of the survey on the experiences in implementing the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, for endorsement by the WGP and transmission to the MOP for adoption as guidance to the Parties.

We consider this to be a valuable overview of experience in implementing the Protocol and a useful contribution to our discussions.

We welcome discussions about options to strengthen the Protocol and support a thorough and constructive consideration of development of the Protocol going beyond its current requirements, based on an informed assessment of technical and legal facts.

There have been significant EU developments since our discussions at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Working Group of the Parties.

As announced in December 2019 in the European Green Deal, we intend to revise EU measures to address pollution from large industrial installations. This will involve a legislative proposal to update both the European PRTR Regulation and the closely-related directive on industrial emissions. These legislative proposals will be presented by the end of 2021. Our aim is to make these two instruments more supportive of EU climate, energy and circular economy policies whilst helping steer the EU towards a zero pollution ambition.

As a precursor to such legislative proposals, we are currently carrying out impact assessments of the European PRTR Regulation and the industrial emissions directive. This will involve extensive consultation with a range of PRTR stakeholders through a variety of forums.

Against that background, the EU and its Member States wish to actively contribute to discussions on the further development of the Kyiv Protocol, including through the consideration of amendments to the Protocol or its annexes.

To this end, we have prepared a draft decision for the Meeting of the Parties on development of the Protocol, for consideration by the eighth Working Group of the Parties. This draft decision invites Parties to submit appropriate amendments to the Protocol pursuant to its Article 20, in time for consideration by the next regular or extraordinary Meeting of the Parties.

This decision also tasks the Working Group, assisted by the Bureau, to facilitate an exchange of information between Parties on possible amendments, and to prepare draft decisions containing amendments to the Protocol proposed by Parties for consideration at the next Meeting of the Parties.

This draft decision was circulated in advance of this meeting. We look forward to engaging with other Parties with regard to development of the Protocol and hope that our draft decision is a useful contribution to the proceedings in this meeting.

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**Agenda item 7: Implementation of the work programme for 2018-2021, including financial matters**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the reports on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 and on contributions and expenditures.

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**Agenda item 8: Preparations for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol**

**b) Substantive preparations**

**(i) Agenda for the fourth session;**

The EU and its Member States approve the draft outline of the provisional agenda for the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, subject to adding under item 5 of the general segment of the draft agenda of the Meeting of the Parties, the consideration of a draft decision on development of the Protocol, which would be proposed by the WGP.

(ii) Declaration;

The EU and its Member States thank the Chairs of the Bureaux and the two Bureaux for preparing the Draft Declaration on ‘Environmental Democracy for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Development’ which is to be considered by the Meetings of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and to the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers at a joint segment. We also thank the Bureaux for taking into account the initial EU + MS comments in the revised version.

(iii) Programme of work for 2022–2025;

The EU and its Member States approve the draft decision on the programme of work for 2022–2025 prepared by the Bureau.

(iv) Reporting requirements;

The EU and its Member States would like to highlight the importance of ensuring a timely, straightforward and functional reporting process and therefore approve the draft decision on reporting requirements prepared by the Bureau.

(v) Financial arrangements under the Protocol.

The EU and its Member States recognize the necessity of ensuring the predictability and sustainability of funding and appreciate the efforts for exploring new possibilities for providing adequate funds under the Protocol. However, especially due to the pandemic, the EU and its Member States are not in a position to support Option A and will therefore support Option B for a financial scheme with voluntary contributions.

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**Agenda item 12. Adoption of decisions and outcomes of the meeting**

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the efficient organisation of this meeting. We acknowledge that the current circumstances posed particular challenges and it is a tribute to the organisational arrangements that we have been able to have such a productive eighth meeting. We hope that next year we will be able to benefit from more conventional meetings.