



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) - an updated call for urgent action
	- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Commission on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 17 March 2022.

Ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) - an updated call for urgent action

- Information from the Commission -

The Commission raised the issue of outstanding ratifications of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) at the Environment Council of December 2020 ¹, recalling the importance of resolving them as a matter of urgency. Based on the EU Treaties, the Union has assumed a leading role in international environmental fora, where we pursue an ambitious agenda and advocate for a strong multilateral governance regime based, inter alia, on an array of these agreements, which often provide crucial support in spreading our rules and standards globally.

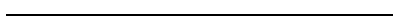
During 2021, there has been some progress in this regard, notably in relation to certain chemicals conventions (Minamata) and Air Convention Protocols.

The Commission appreciates the efforts made and encourages the Member States to keep up this progress in the light of a busy year for multilateral environmental agreements. Special attention is necessary in relation to instruments on biodiversity and pollution, two core priorities of the European Green Deal that call for a global leadership role for the Union. For example, the Convention on Biological Diversity's Nagoya Protocol has only been ratified by 20 Member States and the UNECE Air Convention's Gothenburg Protocol has only been ratified by 19 Member States. This is detrimental to the EU's credibility and negotiating leverage vis-à-vis other countries, in particular during Conferences of the Parties.

¹ Outcome of the meeting of the Environment Council on 17 December 2020 (14114/20); Information from the Commission (13669/20).

To support and encourage Member States' efforts, the Commission has shared overviews of outstanding ratifications on a country-by-country basis.

Member States' support and prompt action would be in line with the Council Conclusions of June 2019 on EU action to strengthen rules based multilateralism ² and with the renewed stimulus under the European Green Deal.



² Conclusions adopted at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council on 19 June 2019 (10341/19)