

Strengthening Public Capacities in the EECCA region to participate in the PRTR process and Access to Information (in Russian)

A discussion group is moderated by Ecological News Agency "Greenwomen" and in consultations with a Russia-based NGO Eco-Accord.

The discussion group "Strengthening Public Capacities in the EECCA region to participate in the PRTR process and Access to Information" seeks to achieve the following goals:

- * **To discuss a role the public can play in developing the national Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR);**
- * **To disseminate information and share experiences of different countries related to the development and operation of PRTR as well as to emphasize the importance the PRTR Protocol.**

Discussions were primarily focused on assessing public capacities to promote the PRTR Protocol and to develop national PRTRs, as well as applying the information provided by the registries to improve environment and to mitigate harmful effects of chemical pollution on public health.

During the course of the first discussion Actions to promote the PRTR Protocol several participants from Russia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus were actively involved in the discussions. Unfortunately in some countries a reliable Internet access is still an issue. Not all registered participants therefore were able to participate in the discussions. UNITAR prepared a User's Manual -guidance how to use the Virtual Classroom - which was distributed to participants upon request and posted in the document section of the Virtual Classroom.

Participants shared their experiences and expressed their opinions about activities taking place in the EECCA region to develop national, regional and local PRTRs.

Participants agreed to further exchange information, share knowledge and experiences and foster international cooperation to promote the PRTR Protocol.

In the course of the first discussion participants recognized that information on the PRTR development as a source of environmental pollution data is of particular importance in improving environment and mitigating harmful effects of chemical pollution on public health.

Participants identified challenges which countries confront when endeavor to develop the PRTR: insufficient understanding of the value and importance of the PRTR Protocol ratification and lack of interest to this process showed by the government. One of the reasons for this tendency is limited public access to environmental information, inadequate emission limits and insufficient monitoring system. For example, in some countries of the EECCA region relevant government institutions are not interested in such issues as accession to the Protocol on water and health or harmonizing legislation with WHO water quality standards etc. In other countries there is a need to assess technical, institutional and legislative frameworks necessary to promote the PRTR Protocol.

We would like to thank all participants of the discussion group Strengthening Public Capacities in the EECCA region to participate in the PRTR process and Access to Information for their valuable contributions and active participation in the discussions and invite them to continue providing their valuable input to the discussion forum.



**To: Ministers of Environment of Eastern Europe,
Caucasus and Central Asia,
Aarhus Convention Secretariat,
Commissioner of Environment of European Commission**

RE:
CALL FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIONS TO PROMOTE PRTR PROTOCOL TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION

Sir/Madam,

Important decisions necessary for implementation of obligations taken by the countries under Aarhus Convention will be taken during the upcoming Second Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention.

Aarhus Convention has triggered an unprecedented process for establishment of ecological democracy in Europe. In many countries it assisted improvement of access to information, participation of the public and access to justice on environmental issues.

Participants of the discussion group from EECCA countries, whose purpose is to promote PRTR Protocol to Aarhus Convention, call upon you to express a constructive position and to take part in discussion of important issues during the Meeting of the Parties in Almaty.

Since Aarhus Convention was ratified, important processes have been initiated in order to achieve goals of the Convention. Participants of the discussion group "Strengthening the role of public in promoting PRTR Protocol to Aarhus Convention in EECCA countries" call upon countries to act in compliance with this line in future, particularly to ratify PRTR Protocol and assist its implementation.

Participants of the discussion group "Strengthening the role of public in promoting PRTR Protocol to Aarhus Convention in EECCA countries"

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON PROMOTION OF PRTR PROTOCOL TO THE AARHUS CONVENTION (POLLUTANT RELEASE AND TRANSFER REGISTRIES):

- Is your country going to sign the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registries Protocol to the Aarhus Convention?
- What steps were taken by the Ministry of Environment in order to sign the Protocol?
- Is there a draft instrument of accession to the Protocol in the country?
- Is there a department (division) or any other body within the Ministry that would be responsible in future for implementation of the Protocol in the country?
- What other ministries or agencies will be interested in implementation of the Protocol in the country?
- What steps were taken by the Ministry to involve the public in the process of consultations regarding signing of the Protocol?
- What informative web-sites are or will be created within the framework of the Aarhus Convention?
- What are factors encouraging and/or discouraging signing of the Protocol?

Participants of the discussion group "Strengthening the role of public in promoting PRTR Protocol to Aarhus Convention in EECCA countries"

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DRAFT STRATEGY OF ACTIONS OF NGO IN EECCA ON PROMOTION OF PRTR PROTOCOL TO AARHUS CONVENTION

GOAL: Creation of the national Pollutant Release and Transfer Registries (PRTR).

Strategy of actions (how to achieve goals?)

Creation of the National Coalition and Consulting Group on PRTR (resource group). (Consulting group is part of the coalition).

PRTR National Coalition

LEADING ORGANIZATION (in each EECCA country)

- * Coordinates activity and disseminates information among all PRTR Coalition members;
- * Distributes information among all PRTR National Coalitions in EECCA countries;
- * Is a correspondent of the virtual forum «Strengthening the role of public in promoting PRTR protocol in VC» (Virtual Classroom) representing its country;
- * Conducts National Coalition meetings;
- * Defines objectives for national PRTR development;
- * Sets forth objectives for evaluation of national PRTR implementation;
- * Ensures objective evaluation;
- * Helps PRTR National Coalition members to coordinate their work;
- * Serves as a liaison with UNITAR and PRTR National Coalitions of EECCA countries;

Who can become a member of PRTR National Coalition?

- * Leader of PRTR National Coalition (leading organization);
- * Representatives of public organizations;

Consulting Group provides consultations and gives recommendations to National Coalition members on national PRTR development: research and assessment of PRTR Protocol implementation.

PRTR Consulting Group

- * UNITAR;
- * “Eco-soglasie”, Russia;
- * Parliament representatives;
- * Representatives of the Ministry of Ecology and other ministries;
- * Representatives of enterprises (businesses);

PRTR Consulting Group is obliged to:

- * Provide consultations on national PRTR development;
- * Provide consultations on research and assessment of PRTR Protocol implementation;
- * Track down and take part in the work;

What results should be expected:

- * National PRTR;
- * Report (assessment) on PRTR Protocol implementation;
- * Actions Strategy (recommendations, mechanisms of implementation of plans and projects);
- * Monitoring;
- * Guidance for national PRTR development;

How shall the results be used:

- * Promotion of the work of PRTR National Coalitions;
- * Development of suggestions on improvement based on the report (assessment) of PRTR Protocol implementation;

- OBJECTIVES:**
- * Evaluation of compliance with obligations under PRTR Protocol in EECCA countries
 - * Development of recommendation on PRTR Protocol promotion in EECCA region
 - * Raising awareness of PRTR National Coalition members in EECCA countries.

- * Distributes UNITAR guiding documents on creation of National PRTR, directs implementation of PRTR Protocol by Aarhus Convention’s working group, etc.;
- * Distributes experience of creation of national PRTR in the countries;
- * Distributes results of research on evaluation of PRTR Protocol implementation;
- * Provides transparency and availability of information, and adapts all materials and information for all PRTR National Coalition members;
- * Raises funds for PRTR National Coalition’s work;
- * Elaborates the itinerary of PRTR National Coalition’s work;
- * Runs information campaigns (preparation of publications, distribution of information among all interested parties);
- * Keeps dialogue with all interested parties.

- * Local authorities;
- * Local people;
- * Businessmen

- * NGO representatives;
- * Mass media;
- * Experts in different areas;
- * Representatives of scientific circles;
- * Representatives of international organizations.

- * Check results and correct errors;
- * Involve the public;
- * Provide assistance in elaborating plans and strategies of actions.

- * Suggestions for improvement of the process of the national PRTR development;
- * National PRTR Coalition is the part of global and regional cooperation network in PRTR sector;
- * Enhancement of cooperation between NGO, Government, enterprises (businesses) and international organizations.

- * Elaboration of recommendations based on the report (assessment) of PRTR Protocol implementation;
- * Monitoring evaluates the progress.



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