

Manual of European Environmental Policy

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International Conventions and Cooperation: Air Quality

Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)

Place of signature	Geneva
Date of signature	13.11.1979
Date of entry into force	16.03.1983
Secretariat	UN Economic Commission for Europe, Environment and Human Settlements Division
Website	http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap
Date of Council Decision on conclusion	11.06.1981
Date of entry into force for EC	16.03.1983
Reference of Council Decision	81/462/EEC

Protocol on Long-Term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-Range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP Protocol)

Place of signature	Geneva
Date of signature	28.09.1984
Date of entry into force	28.01.1988
Date of Council Decision on conclusion	12.06.1982
Date of entry into force for EC	28.01.1988
Reference of Council Decision	86/277/EEC

Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes

Place of signature	Helsinki
Date of signature	08.07.1985
Date of entry into force	02.09.1987

Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes (NO_x Protocol)

Place of signature	Sofia
Date of signature	31.10.1988
Date of entry into force	14.02.1991
Date of Council Decision on accession	17.05.1993
Date of entry into force for EC	17.03.1994
Reference of Council Decision	93/361/EEC

Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes (VOC Protocol)

Place of signature	Geneva
Date of signature	18.11.1998
Date of entry into force	29.09.1997

Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions

Place of signature	Oslo
Date of signature	14.06.1994
Date of entry into force	05.08.1998
Date of Council Decision on conclusion	23.03.1998
Date of entry into force for EC	05.08.1998
Reference of Council Decision	98/686/EC

Protocol on Heavy Metals (Heavy Metals Protocol)

Place of signature	Aarhus
Date of signature	24.06.1998
Date of entry into force	29.12.2003
Date of Council Decision on conclusion	04.04.2001
Date of entry into force for EC	29.12.2003
Reference of Council Decision	2001/379/EC

Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs Protocol)

Place of signature	Aarhus
Date of signature	24.06.1998
Date of entry into force	23.10.2003
Date of Council Decision on conclusion	23.05.2003
Date of entry into force for EC	29.07.2004
Reference of Council Decision	2004/259/EC

Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Multi-Pollutant Protocol)

Place of signature	Gothenburg
Date of signature	30.11.1999
Date of entry into force	17.05.2005
Date of Council Decision on accession	13.06.2003
Date of entry into force for EC	17.05.2005
Reference of Council Decision	2003/507/EC

The Convention was drawn up in 1979 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) as a response to the problem of acid rain. It is open for accession by members of ECE and regional economic integration organizations. Its aim is to limit and gradually reduce air pollution including transboundary air pollution. It provides for exchange of information, research and monitoring and development of policies to combat the discharge of air pollutants. The Geneva Convention is essentially a framework convention which serves as a basis for developing more specific commitments in the form of additional, optional protocols.

The first Protocol, signed in 1984, to which the EC is a party, provides for funding the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP) which provides the basic scientific data on air pollution, transboundary fluxes and effects used for policy development.

A 1985 Protocol signed in Helsinki required parties to reduce their emissions or transboundary fluxes of sulphur dioxide by 30 per cent by 1993, taking 1980 as a base. The EC did not sign the Helsinki Protocol. However, it signed a second sulphur Protocol concluded in Oslo in 1994 and also ratified it. The Protocol, which entered into force in 1998, identified further sulphur reduction targets, which vary between countries and were based on the concept of critical loads. The Community as a whole was to

achieve a reduction of 62 per cent by the year 2000. The Protocol also specified sulphur emission limit values for certain new and existing combustion sources, and sulphur content limits applicable to gas oil, as well as requiring parties to adopt national strategies to achieve their sulphur reduction targets.

A Protocol signed at Sofia in 1988 binds parties to freeze emissions of nitrogen oxides by 1994 at 1987 levels. The EC is a party to the Sofia Protocol.

A 1991 Protocol signed at Geneva commits most parties to a 30 per cent reduction in total annual emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) between 1988 and 1999, and to the development of national strategies to achieve their obligations. The EC ratified the Protocol and accepted the 30 per cent reduction target.

Two further Protocols were signed in Aarhus, Denmark in 1998. The first concerns Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and requires production and use of 16 substances to be immediately banned or progressively phased out. The second concerns heavy metals and aims to reduce polluting emissions of mercury, cadmium and lead to 1990 levels. Both Protocols entered into force in 2003 and have been ratified by the EC and most EU Member States.

A further 'Multi-Pollutant' Protocol was adopted in Gothenburg in 1999, aimed at reducing acidification, eutrophication and low level ozone pollution. It includes a list of national emission ceilings for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds and ammonia for the year 2010. Limit values are also set for specific emission sources (e.g. dry cleaning and electricity production). It sets new targets for emission cuts by 2010 for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and thus builds on the Sofia (NO_x) and Geneva (VOC) Protocols. It is also designed to replace the second sulphur Protocol.

The Multi-Pollutant Protocol entered into force on 17 May 2005. It has been controversial in the EC because the national emission ceilings for several countries are less stringent than those being proposed by the Commission in its proposal for what became the National Emission Ceilings Directive [2001/81/EC](#). All EU Member States signed the Gothenburg Protocol, some saying that more stringent (EC) ceilings would not be acceptable. The Environment Commissioner, meanwhile, refused to sign the Protocol on the behalf of the EC until Member States agreed to more stringent EC standards. After a compromise on the National Emission Ceilings Directive had been reached in 2001, the Council authorized the EC to accede to the Protocol in June 2003.