

**Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP
Nairobi, 6 May 2021**

**Agenda Item 2: Consideration of the cycle of the term of office of the Bureau of the Committee of
Permanent Representative
Background documentation: UNEP/SC/2021/6/2/Corr.1 from 22nd April**

EU+MS comments

- The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for outlining the possible options, and its respective processes and consequences, for the consideration of the cycle of the term of office of the Bureaus of the UN Environment Assembly and the CPR, in a comprehensive and systemic manner.
- Whilst recognizing the extraordinary working circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the EU and its Member States are of the view that the CPR and its Bureau, under the skilful leadership of the Chair, Ambassador Fernando Coimbra, successfully delivered and fulfilled their mandate. As reported to the online session of UNEA-5, the work of the CPR continued virtually without any postponement or delay, with all meetings being convened, thus attesting to the commitment of the CPR membership to ensure the good functioning and operations of this body.
- During the OECPR discussion, the EU and its Member States heard some calls for the continuity and extension of the mandate of the current CPR Bureau, although this possibility is neither foreseen nor grounded in any formal decision. We also heard some concerns that the same regional group would preside, though temporarily (8 months), to both Bureaus, although this has happened in the past without concerns being raised, and will happen in the future unless a systemic solution is found.
- Therefore, the EU and its Members States consider that the preservation of the existing practice of regional rotation is essential to avoid setting precedents.
- The EU and its Member States consider that the election of the new CPR Bureau and Chair for the next 2 years, keeping in line with the mandate and functions of the CPR as set out in Governing Council decisions 19/32 and 27/2, will ensure the normal functioning and deliver on the mandate of the CPR without unintended negative consequences for the future work of this body, as mentioned in the background paper circulated by the Secretariat. We caution against extending and/or limiting the cycles of the Bureaus when not consistent with the existing rules and decisions, as it can possibly constitute a dangerous precedent.
- The EU and its Member States further recall that both Bureaus are separate entities and that there is no provision, nor requirement for the alignment of the cycles of the CPR and UNEA Bureaus. This is the case in UNEP, but also in the UN system at large where plenary and subsidiary bodies are not required to be aligned.
- The EU and its Member States also underline that no formal decision has been taken to “extend” the term of office of the current UNEA Bureau. The present circumstantial situation is due to the decision taken to adjourn the session of UNEA until February 2022. As per Rule 18 (1) of the Rules of Procedure, the new Bureau of UNEA needs to be elected “during the final meeting of the regular session”. In

addition, Rule 20 of the RoP stipulates that the term of office of the next Bureau “shall commence [...] at the closure of the session at which they were elected”.

- The EU and its Member States consider that an overlap of the cycles of CPR and UNEA Bureau can be of added value and a positive factor for ensuring continuity, consistency and effectiveness in the operations of the UNEP governing bodies. Such an overlap allows us to avoid the high transaction costs that would, in our view, be associated with aligned cycles and the resulting change of Bureaus at the same time.