

The Ambient Air Quality Expert Group set up under Directive 2008/50/EC
Report from the Meeting on 20 February 2013, DG Environment, Brussels
Approved by the Member States on 23 October 2013.

(1) Welcome/Introduction

Representatives from the following Member States (MS) attended: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Croatia and Norway were also present. The European Environment Agency (EEA) and Katherine Schleidt (INSPIRE expert) participated on invitation by the Commission (COM). A list of participating Member States and their competent authorities is annexed.

The chair, the team leader for Air Quality in DG Environment Unit C3, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He outlined the objectives of the meetings on 20 and 21 February. The first day was entirely dedicated to the Guidance on the new implementing measures for transmission of information and reporting under Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC, also known as the "IPR guidance".

(2) Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda of the day was adopted without modification.

(3) Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The draft minutes of the last meeting in October 2012 were sent by email at the end of January 2013. The Commission received no comments. The minutes of the Expert Group were adopted without further changes.

(4) Guidance on the new implementing measures for transmission of information and reporting under Directives 2008/50/EC and 2004/107/EC

(a) IPR Pilot group - State of play

The representative of the EEA gave a presentation on "Air Quality e-Reporting – The IPR pilot group facilitating the transition to the new mechanism for air quality reporting and data exchange". He explained the progress made so far and the core challenges. The speaker also mentioned the support of the EEA for the countries/Member States that, for various reasons, were not able to do direct XML reporting. He also mentioned the June workshop to be organised by the EEA where a new Air Quality User Interface (i.e. transformation software) would be presented. The new Interface was going to be used as an interim solution until 2015 (including). The full presentation including recommendations can be found on CIRCABC.

A few questions/comments were raised during the discussion after the presentation:

- One MS asked if there was any progress on the visualisation of XML and how the EEA thought of doing the cross check; they also asked about the model data;
- Two MS stressed that visualisation of monitoring stations in Airbase was important;
- One MS asked when the datasets C and D would be provided;

In response to the questions/comments, the EEA explained that there was indeed some progress on the XML and that the logic of the cross checked routines was already published on the Air Quality Portal. As regards the old Airbase visualization, he explained that a

questionnaire was sent already to the Pilot countries as well as the EC to find out their opinion/request regarding this; for the historical data he mentioned the existence of another kind of map. Datasets B till D could be expected by September.

(b) Presentation by the Commission of the first part of the guidance with the Member States' comments

The presentation focused on the new issues emerging after reading the comments that arrived after the meeting in October 2012. They were: reporting of time, number of significant digits and rounding, code of station, accuracy of coordinates, data capture and time coverage, estimating the number of days in exceedance in a year. The presentation can be found on CIRCABC.

(c) Discussion and exchange of views on the first part of the guidance

Each chapter of the IPR guidance was discussed individually. The most important issues raised in the discussion could be summarized as followed:

- several MS were unclear whether the summer time should be reported;
- some MS were of the opinion that even though the legal position is understood as regards the reporting accuracy of pollutants with limit/target value (e.g. benzo (a) pyrene), the table included in the former version the IPR guidance should be part of the guidance as an indication on how the rounding should be done for the pollutants without an environmental objective;
- one MS suggested that the conversion factor table, originally meant as an example, could become the general rule of how to do the transformation from ppb to $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$; another MS stated that the conversion factor of SO_2 was wrong;
- average exposure indicator (AEI): some MS suggested to add a small paragraph saying that MS could use their own methodology for calculating the AEI. Another MS questioned the proposed weighting (why should a PM_{2.5} annual mean with 95% data capture measured in Bruges should have a higher weight than a PM_{2.5} annual mean measured in Brussels with 85% data capture when these measurements are used to calculate the (population) average exposure). This question was directly addressed to JRC (co- chair of AQUILA present at the meeting);
- some MS were not sure why the contribution of natural sources was in the table of environmental objectives (Table 4 of IPR guidance) as it does not qualify as an environmental objective as such; one MS asked for the insertion of deduction of PM_{2.5} as a result of natural contribution in the data model;
- one MS was unsure about the request of documentation as regards classification of zones as this was already part of the Directive. Since some other MS found that paragraph on this issue quite useful the MS agreed to let it stand;
- one MS suggested to insert a small paragraph about the difference between AIRBASE and EMEP in the chapter regarding the code of station;
- a lengthy discussion took place as regards the reporting the uncertainty of measurements; some MS suggested that it was too time-consuming to calculate and report the uncertainty for each and every measurement; AQUILA was asked to come up with a way of reporting the uncertainty;
- one MS would like to revert to the original station classification definition according to the Exchange of Information guidance, rather than the proposed revision related to population exposure; one MS wondered if the proposed method to calculate percentile is

the correct one and whether it was better to calculate the percentile according to Excel instructions;

- several MS suggested that the reason code for exceedances be added, as it was useful for pollutants of the 4th Daughter Directive;
- some MS wondered if a second method that measures the same pollutant could be used to improve data capture; some other MS stressed that in their opinion this could be done providing that both methods are demonstrated to be equivalent to the reference one; if that is the case the MS wondered if the EEA could aggregate the data;

COM agreed to reflect the issues discussed in the future version of IPR guidance. Nevertheless, the MS were asked to send their comments in writing after the meeting. COM explained that the summer time would not be used. The INSPIRE expert's opinion was that the question was irrelevant as the time should be reported according to ISO 8601 that takes care of this variation. In reply to the issue of PM2.5 and the deduction of natural sources, COM also explained that the table with the environmental objective was part of the already published IPR Decision 2011/850/EC. As regards the percentile, COM/EEA answered that 1) the method of calculating percentile was the same as the one used for the Exchange of Information, and 2) the Excel sheet did not make any difference between the real measured value and the average. EEA confirmed that using the set rules for aggregation, EEA can compile the aggregated data sets used for compliance checking.

(d) Presentation by the Commission of the second part of the guidance

The COM presented the second part of the guidance emphasizing that the part as presented is the Excel translation of XML schemata and gave details on how to complete each record of the XML schemata. The presentation can be found in CIRCABC.

(e) Discussion and exchange of views on the second part of the guidance

The discussion focused on each dataset individually. As for the first part of the IPR guidance the comments/suggestions were taken note of and to be integrated as appropriate in the next version of the guidance.

(f) Conclusion and next steps

The chair presented the next steps as follows:

- Written comments could be sent until 8 March 2013;
- COM would send the IPR Guidance v3 to the MS by 22 March 2013 (later changed to 29 April 2013 due to the work load in the Unit);
- Next meeting of the Ambient Air Quality Expert Group – autumn 2013

The chair thanked all participants for their active engagement.

(5) AOB

None

Annex: List of Participants

| Member State | National Authority/Organisations |
|---------------------|--|
| AT | Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management |
| BE | Interregional Environment Agency; Wallon Agency for air & Climate; Flemish Government – Environment, Nature and Energy Department |
| BG | Ministry of Environment and Water |
| CZ | Ministry of the Environment |
| CY | Ministry of Labour & Social Insurance |
| DE | Federal Environment Agency; NRW State Agency for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety |
| DK | Environmental Protection Agency |
| EE | Ministry of Environment; Environmental Research Centre |
| ES | Ministry of Environment and Marine and Rural Affairs; Institute for Environmental Assessment and Water Research |
| FI | Ministry of Environment |
| FR | Ministère de l'Ecologie, du Développement durable et de l'Energie; INERIS |
| HU | Ministry of Rural Development |
| IE | Environment Protection Agency |
| IT | Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea |
| LT | Ministry of Environment |
| LV | Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development |
| MT | Environmental Protection Directorate (MEPA) |
| NL | Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment; |
| PL | Ministry of Environment; Główny Inspektorat Ochrony Środowiska |
| PT | Environmental Protection Agency |
| SE | Environmental Protection Agency |
| SK | Slovenian Hydro-Meteorological Institute |
| UK | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) |
| NO | Climate and Pollution Agency |
| HR | Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection; Environmental Agency |