

**Montreal Protocol
on Substances that
Deplete the Ozone Layer**Distr.: General
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English only**Open-ended Working Group of the Parties
to the Montreal Protocol on Substances
that Deplete the Ozone Layer
Forty-eighth meeting**
Bangkok, 13–17 July 2026**Sixth Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties
to the Montreal Protocol on Substances
that Deplete the Ozone Layer**
Bangkok, 14 July 2026**Summary of background information on membership of the
group of Eastern European States****Note by the Secretariat****I. Introduction**

1. The present note has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 308 of the report of the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (UNEP/OzL.Pro.37/9).
2. During the preparatory segment of the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties, consensus was not reached on membership of the Implementation Committee under the Non-Compliance Procedure for the Montreal Protocol for 2026. Subsequently, during the adoption of the agenda for the high-level segment of that meeting, parties agreed to consider the issue of membership of the group of Eastern European States under “Other matters”. In the ensuing discussion, parties expressed differing views on the matter. Following a proposal by the President of the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties, it was agreed that interested parties would continue discussions in the intersessional period and that the Ozone Secretariat would provide a summary of background information on membership of the group of Eastern European States in time for the forty-eighth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group.
3. The Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties adopted decision XXXVII/21 authorizing the Ozone Secretariat to organize an extraordinary Meeting of the Parties during the forty-eighth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, to enable parties to take a decision on the outstanding membership of the Implementation Committee for 2026, prior to the seventy-sixth meeting of the Implementation Committee. The Sixth Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol will be held on 14 July 2026.
4. Section II of the present note, on the group of Eastern European States in the context of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol, traces the history of rule 21 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in relation to the reference to the five groups of States mentioned in section I, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and the nominations provided by the group of Eastern European States for the different bodies under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol. Section III provides examples of various systems of grouping States in the United Nations in other multilateral environmental agreements and forums, including examples where the five regional groups referred to

in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 are not used. Section IV contains conclusions that can be drawn from the previous sections.

II. Group of Eastern European States in the context of the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol

A. Rule 21 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol

5. Paragraph 1 of rule 21 of the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol provides that at the beginning of each ordinary meeting, a president, three vice-presidents and a rapporteur shall be elected. It adds that the offices of president and rapporteur of the Meeting of the Parties “shall normally be subject to rotation among the five groups of States referred to in section I, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972”. The five groups mentioned in that resolution are:

- (a) African States;
- (b) Asian States;
- (c) Eastern European States;
- (d) Latin American States;
- (e) Western European and other States.

6. The text of paragraph 1 of rule 21 adopted in 1989 by the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention at its first meeting and by the First Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol did not refer to the rotation of the offices of president or rapporteur among the five groups of States referred to in resolution 2997 (XXVII). That paragraph was amended by decision II/19 of the Second Meeting of the Parties in 1990 and by decision II/1 of the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting in 1991 to include the reference to such rotation.

7. Those amendments were adopted at the recommendation of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), who had suggested that parties “consider adopting by decision the procedure which has been used by the Governing Council of UNEP under which the offices of President and Rapporteur ‘shall be normally subject to rotation among the five groups of States referred to in section I, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII)’”.¹

8. The recommendation of the Executive Director identified the five groups of States as follows:

- (a) African States;
- (b) Asian and Pacific States;²
- (c) Eastern European States;
- (d) Latin American and Caribbean States;³
- (e) Western European and other States.⁴

9. When mentioning the five groups of States referred to in the rules of procedure of meetings of the Conference of the Parties and the Meetings of the Parties, the practice under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol has been to refer to the names identified in the previous paragraph, which correspond to the names used in the list maintained by Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations Secretariat (hereinafter, the five United Nations regional groups; see para. 30 below).

10. The text proposed by the Executive Director for paragraph 1 of rule 21 was taken almost verbatim from paragraph 3 of rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council

¹ See Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Secretariat for the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, document UNEP/OzL.Pro.2/2, paragraph 8.

² Resolution 2997 (XXVII) refers to the group as “Asian States”.

³ Resolution 2997 (XXVII) refers to the group as “Latin American States”.

⁴ The recommendation uses “Western Europe and other States” but it is usually known as “Western European and other States”.

adopted in 1974, according to which the “offices of President and Rapporteur of the Governing Council shall normally be subject to rotation among the five groups of States referred to in section I, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII).”⁵

11. Paragraph 1 of section I of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) specifies the number of members of the UNEP Governing Council from each of the five groups of States mentioned in that paragraph. That resolution does not identify which States are members of each of the five groups.

12. Since the adoption of the amendment to rule 21, members of the bureaux from each of the five regions listed in paragraph 8 above have been elected at every meeting of the Conference of the Parties and every Meeting of the Parties, except for the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties, where no nomination from the Eastern European States was received and no member of the Bureau from that region was elected.

B. Bureau members nominated by the group of Eastern European States

13. The five regional groups referred to in paragraph 1 of rule 21 of the rules of procedure for Meetings of the Parties operate on an informal basis. The Secretariat does not participate in their meetings, unless invited to do so for a specific reason (for example, to clarify requirements relating to nominations) and keeps no records of their meetings or membership. It is for each group to determine when to meet, which States are members of that group, which State convenes its meetings and how the group operates, including how it selects its nominees for Montreal Protocol bodies and how such nominations are conveyed to the Secretariat.⁶ When elections are to take place for Montreal Protocol bodies, the role of the Secretariat is limited to receiving nominations from each group and communicating them to the Meeting of the Parties. The Secretariat does not review how the decision was made in the groups or which parties participated in the decision-making process.

14. In the case of the group of Eastern European States, the first record of discussions in plenary concerning membership of the group can be found in the report of the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Parties in 2023.⁷

15. Reports of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of Meetings of the Parties provide information on which nominations were received from the five United Nations regional groups. Table 1 lists the officers elected to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention since its first meeting after being nominated by the group of Eastern European States, and the parties that they represented.

Table 1
Selection of officers of the bureaux of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention nominated by the group of Eastern European States

<i>Year</i>	<i>Meeting of the Conference of the Parties</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Position</i>
1989	First meeting	Vladimir Zaharov ⁸	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Vice-President
1991	Second meeting	Vladimir Zakharov	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Vice-President
1993	Third meeting	Alexandre Ogryzov	Belarus	Vice-President
1996	Fourth meeting	Alexandre Solovianov	Russian Federation	President
1999	Fifth meeting	Marija Teriosina	Lithuania	Rapporteur
2002	Sixth meeting	Jiří Hlavaček	Czech Republic	Vice-President

⁵ See UNEP Governing Council decision 19 (II) and Report of the Working Group on Rules of Procedure (document UNEP/GC/13), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k73/121/40/img/k7312140.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁶ In September 2025 the group of African States communicated to the Secretariat that it had constituted the African Group of Negotiators (AGN-Ozone). Under its terms of reference, the AGN-Ozone has a chair, a vice-chair and a secretary and, among other things, a procedure for the selection of nominees for Montreal Protocol bodies. In the case of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, nominations have been sent to the Secretariat in recent years through a note verbale from the group’s rotating coordinator. The Secretariat does not have a written record of the practice of the three other groups of States.

⁷ See paragraphs 32–34 and 288 of document UNEP/OzL.Pro.35/12.

⁸ The name of this official is spelled as “Zaharov” in the report of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and “Zakharov” in the report of the second meeting.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Meeting of the Conference of the Parties</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Position</i>
2005	Seventh meeting	Vladimir Verveda	Turkmenistan	Vice-President
2008	Eighth meeting	Mars Amanaliev	Kyrgyzstan	Vice-President
2011	Ninth meeting	Mikheil Tushishvili	Georgia	President
2014	Tenth meeting	Gulmira Sergazina	Kazakhstan	Rapporteur
2017	Eleventh meeting	Liana Ghahramanyan	Armenia	Vice-President
2020	Twelfth meeting	Claudia Dumitru	Romania	Vice-President
2024	Thirteenth meeting	Liana Ghahramanyan	Armenia	Vice-President

16. Table 2 below lists the officers elected to the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol annually since 1989 after being nominated by the group of Eastern European States, and the parties that they represented.

Table 2

Selection of officers of the bureaux of the Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol nominated by the group of Eastern European States

<i>Year</i>	<i>Meeting of the Parties</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Position</i>
1989	First Meeting of the Parties	Vladimir Zaharov ⁹	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Vice-President
1990	Second Meeting of the Parties	Vladimir Zakharov	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Vice-President
1991	Third Meeting of the Parties	Ryszard Purski	Poland	Vice-President
1992	Fourth Meeting of the Parties	Ryszard Purski	Poland	Vice-President
1993	Fifth Meeting of the Parties	Christo Dalchev	Bulgaria	President
1994	Sixth Meeting of the Parties	Janusz Kozakiewicz	Poland	Rapporteur
1995	Seventh Meeting of the Parties	Stanislaw Zelichowski	Poland	Vice-President
1996	Eighth Meeting of the Parties	Armands Plate	Latvia	Vice-President
1997	Ninth Meeting of the Parties	Alexandre Solovianov	Russian Federation	Vice-President
1998	Tenth Meeting of the Parties	Alexandre Solovianov	Russian Federation	President
1999	Eleventh Meeting of the Parties	Janusz Kozakiewicz	Poland	Rapporteur
2000	Twelfth Meeting of the Parties	Jiří Hlavaček	Czech Republic	Vice-President
2001	Thirteenth Meeting of the Parties	Jiří Hlavaček	Czech Republic	Vice-President
2002	Fourteenth Meeting of the Parties	Mikheil Tushishvili	Georgia	Vice-President
2003	Fifteenth Meeting of the Parties	Libor Ambrozek	Czech Republic	President
2004	Sixteenth Meeting of the Parties	Rodica Ella Morohoi	Romania	Rapporteur
2005	Seventeenth Meeting of the Parties	Elena Dumitru	Romania	Vice-President
2006	Eighteenth Meeting of the Parties	Evgeny Gorshkov	Russian Federation	Vice-President
2007	Nineteenth Meeting of the Parties	Miroslav Spasojevic	Serbia	Vice-President
2008	Twentieth Meeting of the Parties	Róbert Tóth	Hungary	President
2009	Twenty-First Meeting of the Parties	Azra Rogović-Grubić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Rapporteur

⁹ The name of this official is spelled as “Zaharov” in the report of the First Meeting of the Parties and “Zakharov” in the report of the Second Meeting of the Parties.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Meeting of the Parties</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Position</i>
2010	Twenty-Second Meeting of the Parties	Sonja Ruzin	Serbia	Vice-President
2011	Twenty-Third Meeting of the Parties	Azra Rogović-Grubić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Vice-President
2012	Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Parties	Dmytro Mormul	Ukraine	Vice-President
2013	Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Parties	Oleksandr Sushko	Ukraine	President
2014	Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Parties	Liana Ghahramanyan	Armenia	Rapporteur
2015	Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties	Sabir Atajanov	Kyrgyzstan	Vice-President
2016	Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties	Andrei Pilipchuk	Belarus	Vice-President
2017	Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the Parties	Azra Rogović-Grubić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Vice-President
2018	Thirtieth Meeting of the Parties	Liana Ghahramanyan	Armenia	President
2019	Thirty-First Meeting of the Parties	Ramona Koska	Hungary	Rapporteur
2020	Thirty-Second Meeting of the Parties	Tatjana Boljević	Montenegro	Vice-President
2021	Thirty-Third Meeting of the Parties	Azra Rogović-Grubić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Vice-President
2022	Thirty-Fourth Meeting of the Parties	Jana Mašíčková	Czechia	Vice-President
2023	Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Parties	Azra Rogović-Grubić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	President
2024	Thirty-Sixth Meeting of the Parties	Claudia Dumitru	Romania	Rapporteur
2025	Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties	(None)	(None)	Vice-President

17. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which appears at the beginning of tables 1 and 2, was dissolved in December 1991. In a letter dated 24 December 1991, Boris Yeltsin, the then President of the Russian Federation, informed the United Nations Secretary-General that the membership of the Soviet Union in the Security Council and all other United Nations organs was being continued by the Russian Federation with the support of the 11 member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.¹⁰

18. In addition to the Russian Federation, the following 14 States became independent after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Of those 15 States, five are currently classified as parties operating under paragraph 1 of Article 5 of the Montreal Protocol (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Turkmenistan) and 10 are classified as parties not so operating (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan). Three of these 15 States have joined the European Union (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Based on the map of Central Asia produced by the United Nations Department of Field Support, five of those States

¹⁰ See: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states/russian-federation>. The Commonwealth of Independent States is a regional intergovernmental organization founded in 1991 by the Russian Federation and 11 republics that were formerly part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. See: <https://eccis.org/en/about-cis>.

comprise the countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).¹¹

19. Table 1 shows that parties from Central Asia were nominated by the group of Eastern European States for the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention in 2005, 2008 and 2014. Table 2 shows that a party from Central Asia was nominated by the group of Eastern European States for the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in 2015.

C. Implementation Committee members nominated by the group of Eastern European States

20. Under paragraph 6 of rule 26 of the rules of procedure for Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, the same rules apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of the committees and working groups, unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.

21. Under paragraph 5 of the non-compliance procedure, the Implementation Committee consists of ten parties elected by the Meeting of the Parties for two years “based on equitable geographical distribution”. The non-compliance procedure does not specify how that geographical distribution is achieved; since paragraph 1 of rule 21 of the rules of procedure applies mutatis mutandis to the membership of the Committee, however, equitable geographical distribution is operationalized by electing two members nominated by each of the five United Nations regional groups.

22. Since 1992, five new members of the Committee have been elected each year. The practice has been for each ordinary Meeting of the Parties to select five members for two years and to confirm the positions of those members elected the previous year for one further year, although such confirmation is not strictly necessary as these members would stay in office for another year even without such confirmation. Table 3 shows which parties have been elected to the Implementation Committee after their nomination by the group of Eastern European States.

Table 3
Selection of members of the Implementation Committee nominated by the group of Eastern European States

<i>Years of tenure</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1990–1992	Hungary	Elected for one year (paragraph 47 of the report of the Second Meeting of the Parties – UNEP/OzL.Pro.2/3). Elected for one additional year (decision III/3) ¹²
1992–1993	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics/Russian Federation	Elected the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for a two-year period (decision III/3). Confirmed the Russian Federation for the second year (decision IV/6)
1993–1994	Bulgaria	Elected for a two-year period (decision IV/6). Confirmed for the second year (decision V/2)
1994–1995	Russian Federation	Elected for a two-year period (decision V/2). Confirmed for the second year (decision VI/3)
1995–1996	Bulgaria	Elected for a two-year period (decision VI/3). Confirmed for the second year (decision VII/21)
1996–1997	Ukraine	Elected for a two-year period (decision VII/21). Confirmed for the second year (decision VIII/3)
1997–1998	Lithuania	Elected for a two-year period (decision VIII/3). Confirmed for the second year (decision IX/12)

¹¹ See:

https://www.un.org/geospatial/sites/www.un.org.geospatial/files/files/documents/2020/May/centralasia_3763r7_decl1.pdf.

¹² First elected for one year in June 1990. Elected for an additional year in June 1991.

<i>Years of tenure</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1998–1999	Latvia	Elected for a two-year period (decision IX/12). Confirmed for the second year (decision X/3)
1999–2000	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision X/3). Confirmed for the second year (decision XI/8)
2000–2001	Czech Republic	Elected for a two-year period (decision XI/8). Confirmed for the second year (decision XII/3)
2001–2002	Slovakia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XII/3). Confirmed for the second year (decision XIII/26)
2002–2003	Bulgaria	Elected for a two-year period (decision XIII/26). Confirmed for the second year (decision XIV/12)
2003–2004	Lithuania	Elected for a two-year period (decision XIV/12). Confirmed for the second year (decision XV/13)
2004–2005	Russian Federation	Elected for a two-year period (decision XV/13). Confirmed for the second year (XVI/42)
2005–2006	Georgia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XVI/42). Confirmed for the second year (decision XVII/43)
2006–2007	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XVII/43). Confirmed for the second year (decision XVIII/1)
2007–2008	Georgia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XVIII/1). Confirmed for the second year (decision XIX/2)
2008–2009	Russian Federation	Elected for a two-year period (decision XIX/2). Confirmed for the second year (decision XX/21)
2009–2010	Armenia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XX/21). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXI/16)
2010–2011	Russian Federation	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXI/6). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXII/23)
2011–2012	Armenia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXII/23). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXIII/18)
2012–2013	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXIII/18). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXIV/21)
2013–2014	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXIV/21). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXV/17)
2014–2015	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXV/17). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXVI/18)
2015–2016	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXVI/18). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXVII/12)

<i>Years of tenure</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Notes</i>
2016–2017	Romania	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXVII/12). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXVIII/13)
2017–2018	Georgia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXVIII/13). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXIX/21)
2018–2019	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXIX/21). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXX/17)
2019–2020	European Union	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXX/17). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXI/13)
2020–2021	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXI/13). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXII/8)
2021–2022	North Macedonia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXII/8). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXIII/10)
2022–2023	Poland	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXIII/10). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXIV/19)
2023–2024	North Macedonia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXIV/19). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXV/22)
2024–2025	Czechia	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXV/22). Confirmed for the second year (decision XXXVI/18)
2025–2026	Montenegro	Elected for a two-year period (decision XXXVI/18)

23. Table 3 shows that no party from Central Asia has been nominated to the Implementation Committee by the group of Eastern European States. None of those parties of Central Asia has been nominated to the Committee by any other regional group. The same table shows that the European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is not a member of any group of States, was nominated by the group of Eastern European States for the Implementation Committee as a member for 2019–2020. Subsequently, for 2021–2022, the European Union was nominated as a member of the Implementation Committee by the group of Western European and other States.¹³

D. Elections to the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund and the rotating seat for Article 5 parties

24. The Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol was established by the Fourth Meeting of the Parties in decision IV/18 in 1992, which also approved its terms of reference.

25. There is a specific procedure for the election of members of the Executive Committee set out in the Committee's terms of reference. Paragraph 2 of the terms of reference states that the Executive Committee is to consist of seven parties from the group of parties operating under paragraph 1 of Article 5 (Article 5 parties) and seven from the group of parties not so operating, with each group selecting its members. Unlike the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties and the Implementation Committee, members of the Executive Committee are not elected by the Meeting of the Parties, which simply endorses the membership of the Committee. Moreover, membership in the Executive Committee is not determined on the basis of the five United Nations regional groups, although the seats for Article 5 parties are distributed among three of those five regions and, every four years, the

¹³ There are member States of the European Union that are considered part of the group of Eastern European States and others that are considered part of the group of Western European and other States.

rotating or seventh seat for Article 5 parties is given to the “region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia” (see paragraph 27 below).

26. The second preambular paragraph of decision XVI/38 adopted by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Parties in 2004 recognized that “for historical reasons, no seat has been allocated in the Executive Committee for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia operating under paragraph 1 of Article 5 of the Protocol”. In introducing the draft proposal during the Sixteenth Meeting of the Parties, the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹⁴ claimed that, since the establishment of the Executive Committee, “the 13 Parties concerned, from the regions of Eastern Europe and Central Asia”, had not formed part of any regional group under the Montreal Protocol and had therefore been unable to participate in the work of the Executive Committee. He added that “the decision would ensure equitable geographical representation in the Executive Committee, while sending an important political message to the Governments of the Parties concerned.”¹⁵

27. Decision XVI/38 modified paragraph 2 of the terms of reference of the Executive Committee, providing that the seven seats earmarked for Article 5 parties should be allocated as follows: two seats to parties of the African region, two seats to parties of the region of Asia and the Pacific, two seats to parties of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, and one rotating seat among the aforementioned regions, “including the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia”.

28. That is the only reference to the “region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia” in a decision adopted by a Meeting of the Parties, on the membership of the Executive Committee. Reports of Meetings of the Parties refer to the five United Nations regional groups, including the group of Eastern European States, when members of the Bureau are elected each year. Decisions on membership of the Implementation Committee do not refer to the regions but nominations are received by the Secretariat from those five regions.

29. Since the adoption of decision XVI/38, a representative from the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia has held the rotating seat for Article 5 parties on the Executive Committee six times, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Members of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund elected to the rotating seat for Article 5 parties from the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia

<i>Year of tenure</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Decision that endorsed the selection</i>
2005	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Decision XVI/43
2009	Georgia	Decision XX/22
2013	Serbia	Decision XXIV/22
2017	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Decision XXVIII/14
2021	Armenia	Decision XXXII/9
2025	Kyrgyzstan	Decision XXXVI/19

III. Groupings in the United Nations and other organizations and forums for elections and for other purposes

30. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the United Nations Secretariat maintains a list of regional groups of United Nations Member States which includes the following five groups (the United Nations regional groups):

- (a) African States;
- (b) Asia-Pacific States;

¹⁴ Further to the communication dated 14 February 2019 from the Permanent Mission addressed to the Protocol and Liaison Service of the United Nations, the country name was changed to “the Republic of North Macedonia” (short form: “North Macedonia”) from the former name of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, effective on that date. See: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states/yugoslavia>.

¹⁵ See paragraph 137 of the report of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (UNEP/OzL.Pro.16/17).

- (c) Eastern European States;
- (d) Latin American and Caribbean States;
- (e) Western European and other States.

31. That list of regional groups is best understood as the United Nations Secretariat’s administrative record of the composition operative within the United Nations system, rather than as a constitutive source that itself creates or alters membership. As at the time of preparation of the present note, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management lists 23 members of the group of Eastern European States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.¹⁶

32. The United Nations regional groups are not instituted as organs of the United Nations. They meet informally and are the mechanism through which the principle of equitable geographical distribution is operationalized in elections and appointments to organs and offices, developing common positions on candidates and related matters. As stated by the Office of Legal Affairs, “although the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies have endorsed in their numerous decisions the new political arrangement which provided for a special role to be played by regional groups in the work of the Organization, none of these decisions has ever defined the concept of a regional group or the criteria for membership of any regional group”.¹⁷ In addition, while “it is not stated in any of the aforementioned decisions in writing, it is understood that admission to a regional group is based on consensus” and because “discussions within regional groups are conducted in private” the “United Nations Secretariat is not privy to these discussions”.¹⁸

33. As regards UNEP, its Governing Council established in resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972 was expanded to include universal membership under General Assembly resolution 67/213 of 21 December 2012 and its name was changed to United Nations Environment Assembly in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/251 of 13 March 2013.

34. Under rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly, its Bureau shall elect a president, eight vice-presidents and a rapporteur. According to paragraph 3 of that rule, the offices of president and rapporteur “shall normally be subject to rotation among the five groups of States referred to in section I, paragraph 1, of the General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII).” Such reference is understood as a reference to the five United Nations regional groups.

35. Although the five United Nations regional groups are relevant for elections and appointments in particular, the United Nations, its programmes and organs maintain other lists that do not follow those regional groups for different purposes. Such is the case of the UNEP Europe Office, which covers all 27 European Union member States and 28 other States (a total of 55), transcending Eastern Europe. It includes various States, such as, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.¹⁹ The Regional Office for Europe has branches in Almaty (Kazakhstan), Brussels (Belgium), Moscow (Russian Federation) and Vienna (Austria).

36. Another example is provided by the regional networks of the UNEP OzonAction Compliance Assistance Programme, which do not correspond to the five regions referred to in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVI). These nine regional networks include only Article 5 parties. One of those regional networks is the Europe and Central Asia network, with 11 members: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Turkmenistan.²⁰

37. Not all multilateral environmental agreements and processes follow the five-group structure of the United Nations for the purposes of nominations and elections. Several bodies in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change include in their composition members from the United Nations regional groups, but also members representing small island developing States and least developed countries.²¹ The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

¹⁶ This information from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is publicly available at: <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups>.

¹⁷ *United Nations Juridical Yearbook 2003*, p. 529.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ <https://www.unep.org/regions/europe>.

²⁰ See: <https://www.unep.org/ozonaction/networks>.

²¹ See: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Membership_arrangements_of_UNFCCC_bodies.pdf.

of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) does not follow the five United Nations regional groups and, instead, is organized in six major geographical regions, including Europe.²² The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat is also organized around six regions, including Europe.²³ Multilateral environmental agreements and processes that follow the five-group structure include the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal,²⁴ the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade,²⁵ the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,²⁶ and also the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution.²⁷

IV. Conclusions

38. The practice under the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, in accordance with the respective Rules of Procedure, has been to follow the five United Nations regional groups referred to in paragraphs 8 and 30 above. These groups operate on an informal basis. The Ozone Secretariat does not participate in their meetings unless invited for a specific reason, and keeps no records of their meetings or membership. It is for each group to determine when to meet, which parties are its members, which member convenes its meetings and how the group operates, including how it selects its nominees for Montreal Protocol bodies and how it communicates those nominations.

39. Reports of meetings of the Conference of the Parties and of the Meetings of the Parties show that, between 2008 and 2015, some parties from Central Asia were nominated by the group of Eastern European States for the bureaux of those bodies. No parties from Central Asia have been nominated by the group of Eastern European States or any other regional group for the Implementation Committee.

40. Elections for the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund are governed by the terms of reference of the Fund and follow rules that are different from those concerning the bureaux of the Conference of the Parties, the Meetings of the Parties and the Implementation Committee. For the Executive Committee, one of the seats reserved for Article 5 parties rotates among regions, including the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which is referred to only in decision XVI/38.

41. The first record of discussions concerning membership of the group of Eastern European States is found in the report of the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Parties in 2023.

42. Other multilateral environmental agreements and forums have their own categorizations of regional groups and different rules on membership in their treaty bodies. Some use the five United Nations regional groups, but others do not.

43. The parties may wish to further consider the matter of membership in the group of Eastern European States in the context of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol.

²² See, among others, paragraph 3 a) of the Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parties of CITES available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/COP/19/resolution/E-Res-18-02.pdf>.

²³ See paragraph 3 of Annex 1 of resolution XV.2 of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, available at: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/xv.2_standing_committee_e.pdf.

²⁴ See paragraph 1 of rule 21 of the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention.

²⁵ See paragraph 1 of rule 22 of the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention.

²⁶ See paragraph 1 of rule 22 of the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention.

²⁷ See draft rule 9.2 of the draft rules of procedure for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (UNEP/PP/INC.5/3).