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UN agreement to allow people to check local pollution online



23 April 2010 – A United Nations-backed group on pollution registration – which allows European to find out about sources of pollution in their neighbourhoods – has wrapped up its first meeting in Geneva.

The 2003 Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) entered into force last October, and currently, 23 countries and the European Union are parties to it.

The first-ever legally binding pact on pollutants, it requires countries to publicly report every year the amounts of certain types of pollutants, such as greenhouse gases or heavy metals, released in the air or transferred to other facilities by sources such as chemical plants, power stations, oil and gas refineries, mines and waste plants.

“The Protocol establishes a new international benchmark in securing public access to information on threats posed to our environment by toxic emissions,” said Ján Kubiš, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE](#)).

“It will enable ordinary citizens, simply using the Internet, to find out about the major sources of polluting emissions in their immediate neighbourhoods,” he added.

The Protocol is part of the so-called UNECE Aarhus Convention, or the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which entered into force in October 2001.

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