
Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents

Bureau

Twenty-fifth meeting
Geneva, 11 and 12 June 2013

Minutes of the meeting

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents held a meeting in Geneva on 11 and 12 June 2013.
2. The following members of the Bureau attended the meeting: Mr. C. Dijkens (Netherlands), Chair; Ms. J. Karba (Slovenia) and Mr. G. Hem (Norway), Vice-chairs; Ms. A. Aleksandryan (Armenia); Mr. P. Forint (Czech Republic); Mr. G. Winkelmann-Oei (Germany); Ms. S. Stirbu (Republic of Moldova); Mr. B. Gay (Switzerland); and Ms. J. Michielssen (European Commission) (12 June only). Mr. C. Piacente (Italy) was unable to participate and Mr. M. Merkofer (Switzerland) represented the Working Group on Implementation (WGI) (on behalf of the Chair, Ms. S. Ashcroft (United Kingdom)).
3. Mr. M. Keiner, Director of ECE Environment Division, welcomed participants and the newly appointed Secretary to the Convention, Ms. Laura Meszaros. At the same time he expressed his gratitude to Mr. N. Bonvoisin, previous Secretary to the Convention, for his work. Members of the Bureau welcomed Ms. Meszaros and expressed their satisfaction over the swift transition in the secretariat.
4. The Bureau adopted the agenda (CP.TEIA/B/2013/INF.10).

II. Financing and overall implementation of the workplan

5. The secretariat reported on contributions and expenditures from the Convention's trust fund and on planned expenditures in 2013 and 2014. The secretariat indicated that by the end of the year the situation of the trust fund will not be as robust as at present and that special effort would need to be made soon to mobilize resources for activities. **The Bureau discussed the topic of earmarking financial contributions to the trust fund and agreed that whilst donor countries have particular interests and requirements towards their contributions, there should be a balance between earmarking and trust fund flexibility in order to ensure the implementation of agreed activities.**
6. The Chair addressed a previous decision to extend the contract of the associate expert, funded by Germany until 31 October 2013. The contract could be extended, with equal co-funding from the trust fund and Germany for either one or two years. **The meeting decided that the contract of the associate expert should be extended for two years with 50% co-funding from Germany and the Convention's trust fund.**
7. **To implement the above-mentioned agreement, the Bureau requested the secretariat to send a letter to the German Ministry of Environment confirming its**

intention to extend the contract of the associate expert and thank them for making the necessary resources available for the extension. The Bureau also agreed to review the workload of the secretariat in 2015.

8. To support the discussion, the secretariat had prepared two notes, one listing staff responsibilities within the secretariat and the other reflecting the financial impact of the extension of the associate expert on the trust fund over a period of two years.

9. Members of the Bureau provided information on expected contributions to the trust fund in 2013: the Czech Republic indicated a financial contribution of US\$ 8,500 for the current year, Germany committed to further provide funding for the implementation of the project on hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta, Switzerland pledged a financial contribution, earmarked for particular activities within the Assistance Programme and the Netherlands was considering an additional contribution. **The meeting reiterated the importance of focusing on workplan priorities expressed by the Conference of the Parties (COP). The meeting confirmed that Assistance Programme activities would continue to have the highest priority.**

10. The Bureau discussed the implementation of the adopted sustainable financial mechanism, including the writing of letters to potential new donors inviting them to provide financial and in-kind contributions. **The secretariat informed about the contribution of Albania to the trust fund which the meeting considered as a good example of commitment by a country with an economy in transition. To acknowledge this contribution, the Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare and send a formal letter to Albania expressing gratitude for its contribution.**

11. The Chair reported on the work of the small working group on financing and stated that this activity would be a priority for the second half of the year and for 2014. Members of the group might decide to hold their next meeting in Geneva.

III. Involvement of Parties and other stakeholders

12. The Conference of the Parties had regretted the absence of 11 Parties at its seventh meeting and requested the secretariat to identify the main reasons behind recurring absences of some Parties at the COPs. The secretariat reported that the majority of these countries face administrative changes in national competent authorities as well as frequent changes of their focal points. **The meeting agreed to step up efforts in 2014 in order to ensure the participation of all Parties to the Convention using a multichannel approach: high level letters would be sent to these 11 countries, addressed to the ministries of foreign affairs and copied to their missions; the topic would be included in high level meetings by the Executive Secretary of ECE and other high ranking ECE officers; contact with focal points would be pursued to increase their engagement, emphasizing the benefits for attending COPs and encouraging countries to update the contact information about their focal points, closer to the time of COP. The secretariat will track progress on this issue and report to the Bureau at subsequent meetings.**

13. The Bureau discussed how to encourage and engage the participation of the Russian Federation in the activities of the Convention. The secretariat indicated that cooperation and coordination with the national focal point could be increased. **Mr. Keiner informed the meeting that he would participate in a meeting with high level representatives of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva that week and that he would raise this topic at that meeting. The Bureau agreed that cooperation with the Russian Federation should also be sought within relevant international forums and by proposing joint projects, like the project on “Raising knowledge on industrial safety at universities”, in which there was active participation of Russian universities, and it requested the secretariat to prepare one page strategy document on cooperation with the Russian Federation for the next Bureau meeting, taking into account synergies**

with other Conventions and possible communication through the Russian focal points. The strategy document would also be shared with the WGI.

14. The Chair and the secretariat reported on the representation of the Convention in the following forums: the Second Europe and Central Asia Housing Forum, including a thematic session on land use planning and industrial safety, 23 April 2013, Geneva. The participation to the forum was in cooperation with the ECE Housing and land management unit; the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies Forum, 15-17 May 2013 Geneva; the Fourth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 21-23 May 2013, Geneva, where the Convention was involved in a side event in cooperation with the Green Croo International; the XI International Forum on Industrial Safety, 27-30 May 2013 St. Petersburg (Russian Federation).

15. The Bureau discussed how it might improve gender balance when involving Parties and other stakeholders. **The Bureau agreed on the need to encourage countries to nominate more female representatives to the bodies of the Convention and technical experts within the Assistance Programme projects. It was also agreed that a note referring to the need to give equal opportunities to women in order to engage them in project implementation, could be added to project documents in the future.**

16. The Bureau discussed the involvement of the United States of America and Canada in the workplan of the Convention. **The Chair reported on his contact with the U.S. EPA and indicated that he would follow-up on this issue during his visit to the U.S. EPA in August 2013. The Chair will liaise with the secretariat after his mission to discuss follow-up actions.**

IV. Exchange of information

17. The Bureau welcomed information provided by Mr. Winkelmann-Oei on the activity entitled “Raising knowledge on industrial safety at universities (follow-up to a pilot project in Armenia)” led by Germany. Ms. Aleksandryan expressed her support for the project and valued it as a success. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei reported on possible follow-up activities suggested by participants in the project and also proposed exploring synergies with the Aarhus Convention¹.

18. The Bureau expressed its gratitude to Germany and Armenia for the successful implementation of the project and endorsed the proposal for future follow-up projects. **Bureau members also invited Mr. Winkelmann-Oei to investigate possible funding sources and to report this issue at the next Bureau meeting; the bureau also agreed with Germany’s proposal to organise similar workshops in universities that already expressed an interest. It also recommended that the possibility to develop modules on different aspects of the Convention, with a possible wider scope (beyond mining), should be explored and presented at the next meeting.** This could involve the development of a module for replication in other countries, possibly starting with Russian-speaking countries. **The secretariat was tasked to prepare a draft note on a possible way forward.**

19. **The Bureau decided that the final report of the project should be disseminated through the Convention’s website and that the link to the report should be shared with national focal points, inviting them to provide expressions of interest in possible follow-up projects. It was agreed that this activity should be integrated into the Convention’s workplan.**

¹ ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

20. Possible follow-up activities would be discussed by the Bureau at its next meeting, including cooperation with OECD.

V. Assistance Programme activities

21. Mr. Merkofer reported on decisions concerning the Assistance Programme management, taken by the WGI at its meeting on 4–5 June. In particular he reported on:

- Monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including the results of the evaluations of the small operational group

The meeting agreed with the WGI regarding its conclusions of the review of the self-assessments and the action plans submitted by beneficiary countries. The Bureau also agreed with the follow-up proposed by the WGI. The Chair noted that countries should feel ownership of the results of the implementation of the Strategic Approach instead of regarding it as an administrative burden.

- Evaluation of the indicators and criteria as per the mandate from the Conference of the Parties

The Chair noted that countries within the Assistance Programme should be the main beneficiaries of the indicators and criteria **and invited the WGI to seek feedback from countries on their user-friendliness.** The possibility of introducing a different format and approach towards the criteria and indicators was discussed. The Chair pointed out that the overall responsibility and ownership of the beneficiary countries in the Strategic Approach needs to be maintained and reinforced. Mr. Merkofer presented the discussion and decision by the WGI on this issue and described that; a step-by-step approach had been proposed which involved proceeding with editorial amendments to increase the clarity and simplicity of the text, while seeking feedback from beneficiary countries on problems that they may have encountered. On the basis of the results of this first assessment, the WGI would decide at its meeting in November 2013 on the way forward. **The Bureau endorsed the way-forward proposed by the WGI and took note of the fact that the WGI would further discuss this issue at its next meeting. It also requested the WGI for a briefing on this issue at its next joint meeting with WGI.**

- Preparation of terms of reference for implementation of projects within the Assistance Programme

The Bureau discussed terms of reference for the implementation of projects within the Assistance Programme. The Bureau discussed the draft document developed by the WGI. During the discussion, major issues were raised, including: a) that the overall objectives of the document should be to facilitate access of Parties and other beneficiary countries to activities under the Assistance Programme and to provide greater flexibility to parties in the implementation of workplan activities; b) the need for increased clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the preparation and implementation of project proposals; c) the need for a more prominent role of beneficiary countries in the implementation and reporting of project activities; d) that the main role of the secretariat is to oversee and coordinate the implementation of projects and related activities; e) the importance establishing priorities for project implementation and, f) that Parties should be given priority when requesting support under the assistance programme. The Bureau also discussed the proposal from the WGI to insert a paragraph at the beginning of the document, concerning the possibility of holding informal consultations with the Bureau before submitting project proposals to the WGI through the secretariat. **The Bureau disagreed to this last suggestion from the WGI. It then requested the secretariat to recirculate the draft terms of reference, addressing the topics discussed and agreements reached during the discussions, by 15 July to the Bureau and WGI. Members of the two bodies should submit their comments to the secretariat by 1 August.**

22. The secretariat reported on the sending of letters on behalf of the Chairs of the Bureau and WGI, reminding countries benefitting from the Assistance Programme of their obligation to carry out self-assessments and to submit action plans, as well as of the benefits of doing so. The secretariat also reported on the replies received so far and Mr. Merkhofer informed the Bureau about the decision of WGI on the way forward.

23. The secretariat reported on its invitation to Montenegro to engage in activities of the Convention and requested the Bureau to review the timing of the invitation to be sent to Turkmenistan, **The Bureau agreed that the letter to Turkmenistan could be sent during the second half of 2013.**

24. The secretariat reported on the accession to the Convention by Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had become its forty-first Party on 21 May 2013, and on its correspondence with the country. The country has now the legal basis to collect information from different stakeholders in order to compile a self-assessment, an action plan and to report on implementation of the Convention.

25. The secretariat reported on progress made towards organising a seminar in Kyrgyzstan involving all relevant national departments. The secretariat reminded the Bureau that it had secured access to some funds to support a seminar or similar event in one country in Central Asia, within a project funded by the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and that the main topics and stakeholders had been identified. **The Bureau endorsed the continuation of this activity.**

26. The Bureau agreed to proceed with the organisation of follow-up projects in Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Financial resources for the implementation of these projects have been secured under the ENVSEC Programme.

27. The secretariat reported on a letter received from Georgia indicating their intention to strengthen their involvement in activities of the Convention and their willingness to ratify the Convention. The letter welcomed UNECE's support towards helping Georgia meet the requirements of the Convention. The secretariat also reported that, in a subsequent e-mail the country expressed its interest in receiving technical assistance in compliance with the Seveso II Directive. The Bureau **agreed on the proposal to organise a mission to Georgia before the end of the current year in order to help the country identify its priorities towards ratification of the Convention and to provide guidance towards the preparation of its self-assessment. The Bureau requested the secretariat to send a reply to Georgia. The representative of the European Commission reacted positively to the possible involvement of the EC or its representation in a future mission to Georgia. The Bureau also agreed to the participation of the Bureau Chair in this mission.**

28. The secretariat informed the meeting about progress made with the project on hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, in particular regarding the Safety Guidelines and Good Industry Practices for Oil Terminals and the organisation of a workshop on this topic in Odessa, scheduled for September 2013. The secretariat expressed concerns about timing issues due to the ongoing reorganisation within the Ukrainian Ministry of Environment and the need for an approval from the Ministry of Infrastructure for visiting the oil terminals in Ukraine. The secretariat also updated the Bureau on the crisis management segment of the project and its effort to find funding for this project component.

29. **Mr. Winkelmann-Oei drew attention to the need of the secretariat to inform Germany via official correspondence about any delays in the implementation of this project, as this could affect the availability of resources within agreed timelines.**

VI. Strategic partnerships

30. The meeting discussed the following activities on strategic partnerships:

A. Development of a guide on methodology for hazard rating

31. The secretariat updated the meeting about progress made on this issue and reported on possible interest from the Joint Research Centre of the EU. **The Bureau requested the secretariat to undertake an internet search of existing guidelines and methodologies which might contribute to the achievement of the objectives of this activity and to report on the progress at its next meeting.**

B. Sharing of good practices for safety and land-use planning

32. The secretariat informed the Bureau that the European Commission's Major Accident Hazards Bureau (MAHB) had agreed to include non-EU participants from the ECE region in a joint workshop in November 2013. Participation will be funded by the EC, with the exception of Central Asia countries, which are not eligible for funding.

33. **The Bureau agreed that there should be a greater emphasis on land-use planning in the agenda of the workshop on accident analysis and risk assessment and to fund the participation of one representative of the Central Asia countries from the trust fund up to a maximum of US\$ 9,000 (and a possible additional US\$ 2,000, if there is a need for financing interpretation). The secretariat will follow-up on the agenda and participation for this workshop.**

C. Development of guidelines on transboundary risk assessment, possibly including the characterization of exposure risks (RIECO project)

34. Ms. Stirbu updated the meeting about progress made on the implementation of this activity. Within the project, an internet-based survey was developed and disseminated. The information received from beneficiary countries was used to develop a workshop scheduled for September 2013. Ms. Stirbu also informed the meeting about possible synergies with the Danube Delta project.

35. The secretariat was requested to support the lead country and to make the necessary arrangements for the workshop to take place, including transferring of resources as agreed by the Bureau at a previous meeting².

D. Risk management at tailings management facilities: development of a checklist and practical exercises

36. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei informed the Bureau about progress made concerning the development of a checklist with Ukraine based on the safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/9). The Bureau welcomed progress made and expressed its interest in making the checklist and possibly other project materials available to other ECE countries upon finalisation.

² At the time of finalising the present minutes, the lead country for the project identified Chisinau as the venue for the activity and the secretariat completed the internal procedures to proceed with this activity.

E. Other partnership activities

37. The secretariat reported on the outcome of an ECE-organized inter-agency coordination meeting on industrial accidents, held on 29 April 2013. Participants identified key areas of cooperation and possible synergies which they documented in tables containing information from each organization. Participants also agreed that future meetings should be held on a yearly basis with a rotation in chairmanship. The next meeting will be hosted by the World Health Organization Regional Office in Bonn in April 2014. **The Bureau welcomed the proposal to make all information about the first inter-agency meeting available on the Convention's website.**

38. The Conference of the Parties encouraged all Parties and other ECE member States to report on major accidents using the EU's major accident reporting system (eMARS), and requested EC and the secretariat to facilitate reporting. The secretariat informed the meeting that, on the MAHB workshop mentioned in paragraph 33, to be held in November 2013, the issue of reporting will be discussed and that hands-on sessions on reporting are foreseen.

39. The Chair of the Bureau reported on the results of an informal meeting among officers of ECE multilateral environmental agreements held in Geneva on 27 February 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the identification and implementation of potential synergies between the agreements, to discuss possible further actions towards increased implementation of ECE multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) in Central Asia and to exchange views on how to address issues related to MEAs at the upcoming session of the Committee on Environmental Policy and within the "Environment for Europe" Process mid-term review. The secretariat presented a background paper on financial arrangements prepared to facilitate discussions at that meeting between the representatives of the governing bodies of the ECE environmental treaties and the ECE Committee of Environmental Policy. **The meeting requested the Chair to continue working in this area.**

40. The secretariat reported on the launch of the on-line training platform providing an introduction to industrial accidents, developed jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Joint Environment Unit of UNEP and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)³. The on-line training platform will also be available in Russian and French. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the interest of the EU to translate the training platform into other languages. **The Bureau recommended that the link to the training platform should be circulated to all national focal points once the Russian and French versions become available.**

41. The Bureau discussed the possible addition of the following organizations to its list of strategic partners: European Environmental Bureau; Green Cross International; and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.⁴ **The Bureau requested the secretariat to provide a brief note on cooperation with these partners, for consideration at its next meeting, in line with what has already been developed for other partners.**

VII. Amendment of the Convention

42. On behalf of Mr. Piacente, Chair of the Working Group on Development, the secretariat reported on progress made and preparations for the meeting of the Working Group on Development, to be held on 3–4 September 2013 in Geneva. The Bureau recognized the importance of the participation of representative from countries of Eastern

³ Available at www.eecentre.org under the rubric *training* and *on-line learning*; registration is required.

⁴ Information on these organizations may be found at the respective websites: <http://www.eeb.org/>; <http://www.gcint.org/>; and <http://www.unisdr.org/>.

and South-Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in this meeting in order to take into account their views and concerns in the process of amending the Convention. **To this end, the Bureau requested the Chairs of the WGD and the COP to jointly write to the competent authorities/focal points of these countries encouraging them to send representatives to the meeting of the Working Group on Development. Letters should be sent in copy to the diplomatic missions in Geneva, to increase the visibility of the invitation.**

43. During the Bureau meeting, the secretariat disseminated copies of the publication of the Convention as presently amended.

VIII. Industrial Accident Notification System

44. The secretariat informed the meeting about progress made towards re-operationalizing some of the functions of the on-line application of the ECE Industrial Accident Notification System. The secretariat reported that Switzerland had kindly agreed to fund a consultant to address the required task and that work on this is to start soon. The meeting expressed its gratitude to Switzerland for its support.

45. **The Bureau agreed to postpone the consultation of points of contact, tentatively planned for 2–3 December 2013, since additional time was needed to perform a test of the ECE Industrial Accident Notification System after its repair.** The secretariat will review the timing for this consultation after the meeting of the WGI on the implementation reports, planned for 2014.

IX. Prevention of accidental water pollution

46. At its meeting on 29–30 January 2013 in Geneva, the Bureau requested the Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG)⁵ to invite national focal points and other experts to comment on the draft of guidelines on contingency planning for transboundary waters, specifying any necessary adjustments.

47. Responses were received from five focal points. Comments diverged and ranged from full approval of the document to a suggestion that the work on the document should be discontinued. At the Water Convention Bureau meeting, Mr. Kovac one of the JEG co-Chair recalled the main problem of JEG, i.e. insufficient expertise to finalize the product. The Bureau concluded that the contingency guidelines were useful, but required further work. After the meeting of the Water Convention Bureau, the Water Convention secretariat reconfirmed with Mr. Kovac, its readiness to organize the meeting in Hungary and his flexibility with the dates. Mr. Kovacs also suggested hiring an expert consultant (approx. 20,000 USD) to improve the draft.

48. **The Bureau expressed concern about the latest developments and suggested that the Chair of the Industrial Accidents Convention should initiate a teleconference with the Chair of the Water Convention and both JEG co-Chairs to discuss future work of the guidelines on contingency planning for transboundary waters, including whether to hire a consultant. The Bureau recognised the need for strengthening the expert capacity of the JEG and underlined its importance as an interface between two ECE environmental Conventions.**

⁵ A joint body under the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

49. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei presented recommendations of the seminar which was held on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sandoz accident (Bonn, Germany, 8–9 November 2011). **The Bureau requested Mr. Winkelmann-Oei to draft a short proposal for a JEG activity, based on the recommendations of the seminar.**

50. The secretariat reported on progress made towards the publication of the safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities and the re-printing of the safety guidelines on pipelines.

X. Implementation of the Convention

51. Mr. Merkofer reported on the Working Group's meeting and provided an update on the calendar for the implementation of the decisions taken by the Working Group, including a change in the reporting format, to allow a timely start of the next reporting cycle.

XI. Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties

52. The meeting discussed possible dates and venues for the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Since there were no proposals from Parties to host the COP, the secretariat recommended, as a precautionary measure, to provisionally book the meeting facilities at the Palais for the week of the 18th November 2014. In the meantime informal consultations regarding other possible hosts would continue. **The secretariat was to inquire about the dates and availability of the facilities at the Palais des Nations and, if available, make provisional bookings for the week of the 18th of November, should the meeting take place in Geneva. This topic will be revisited at the next Bureau meeting⁶.**

XII. Other business

53. **The Bureau entrusted the Chair of the Bureau to discuss with the Chair of the WGI, before the joint meeting in November, the frequency and length of joint meetings of the two bodies. The Chair of the Bureau will inform about the outcome of these discussions at the next meeting of the Bureau.**

XIII. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

54. The meeting agreed that there was no time available to revisit decisions made during the meeting.

55. The Bureau confirmed its intention to organise its next meetings on 27–28 November 2013, in United Kingdom (jointly with WGI) and on 16–17 June 2014, in Geneva. The Bureau tentatively agreed to hold another meeting, in preparation of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, back-to-back with the Conference of the Parties in Geneva, unless an alternative venue for the next meeting for the Conference of the Parties would be identified.

56. The Chair closed the meeting on 12 June 2013.

⁶ At the time of the finalisation of these minutes, the secretariat booked the following dates for the 2014 COP at the Palais: December 2 - 5 (2 + ½ days), confirmed. November 12 - 14 (2 days, since this is all that was available), as a backup if an additional ½ day becomes available.