

24 February 2017  
English only

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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

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

#### **Bureau**

##### **Thirty-fourth meeting**

Geneva, 30–31 January 2017

### **Minutes of the thirty-fourth meeting**

#### **I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. The thirty-fourth meeting of the Bureau under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. It was followed by a joint meeting with the Convention's Working Group on Implementation in the afternoon of 31 January.<sup>1</sup>

2. The following Bureau members were present:

- Jasmina Karba (Slovenia), Chair
- Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland), Vice-Chair
- Michael Struckl (Austria)
- Senad Oprasic (Bosnia and Herzegovina),
- Pavel Forint (Czech Republic)
- Aléxandros Kiriazis (European Union)
- Torill Tandberg (Norway)
- Martin Merkofer (Switzerland).

Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany), co-Chair of the Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, and Mr. Paweł Dadasiewicz (Poland), Vice-Chair, were absent.

3. The meeting was serviced by the secretariat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

4. The Bureau adopted without changes the provisional agenda (CP.TEIA/2017/B.1/Agenda), as prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

5. Members of the Bureau introduced themselves and shared information on their key interests in the Bureau's work.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the joint meeting is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44033>.

## **II. Follow-up to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

### **A. Representation**

6. The Bureau took note of information provided by the secretariat on representation (38 out of 41 Parties present) at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Ljubljana, 28-30 November 2016), credentials (37 out of 38 Parties) and the record number of participants (approximately 150), including representatives of all countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Secretary highlighted the funding provided by Germany and Slovenia to support participation by representatives of eligible countries. The Bureau recognized the particular importance of the joint UNECE and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) seminar and the consideration of a proposed amendment in raising participation.

### **B. Evaluation of the meeting and lessons learned**

7. The Bureau took note of the largely positive results of an informal evaluation of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, based on 25 evaluation forms completed during that meeting.<sup>2</sup>

8. The Bureau agreed on the value of side events, which provided a venue for discussing more technical issues, in contrast with the focus on legal and policy issues in plenary. It was suggested that, in future, participants be given more time to eat their lunch before attending a side event.

### **C. Membership of the Bureau**

9. The Bureau reflected on the process by which nominations for its composition had been made and on the eventual composition of the Bureau as elected by the Conference of the Parties. It also referred to its new terms of reference and the revised rules of procedure (ECE/CP.TEIA/32, forthcoming). The Bureau considered the time schedule, the geographic and gender balance and the language used in Bureau meetings.

10. The Bureau regretted that, in particular, a better balance between different geographic subregions of UNECE had not been achieved and will strive to achieve a better balance in the next composition of the Bureau. The Bureau decided that it should begin the identification of possible candidates for the Bureau earlier than in the previous biennium, specifically at its meeting to be held at the start of 2018. Contacts could also be made at subregional events during the biennium. Limited English language skills should not necessarily be seen as an impediment to membership of the Bureau, though the Bureau will conduct its business in English.

### **D. Amendment of the Convention**

11. The Bureau discussed the failure to achieve consensus at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the adoption of a proposed amendment to the Convention and

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<sup>2</sup> The results of the evaluation are available on the webpage for the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/cop9>.

what action the Bureau might take in view of the decision by the Conference of the Parties to re-visit the amendment at its tenth meeting.

12. The Bureau decided not to take any formal steps at this time, but to make informal enquiries and to re-visit the matter at its next meeting.

13. The Bureau considered that, in future, in the event of the Working Group on Development being convened, delegations should be required to provide credentials if attending the final meeting of the Working Group prior to the submission of a proposed amendment to a meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

#### **E. Joint UNECE/OECD seminar**

14. The Bureau expressed its satisfaction with the joint UNECE/OECD seminar on fostering implementation of the sustainable development agenda for industrial accidents prevention, preparedness and response, held within the framework of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It was suggested that the outcomes of the seminar be raised in the next inter-agency coordination meeting on industrial accidents (Brussels, April/May 2017). The chairs of the respective UNECE and OECD bodies, Ms. Karba and Ms. Tandberg, agreed to draft some messages from the seminar for inclusion in a possible press release marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention (17 March 1992). It was also suggested that a key conclusion of the seminar was the need to focus on coordination and on breaking down silos.

15. The Chair pointed out the importance of risk assessment in the European Union's action plan for the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,<sup>3</sup> providing a link to a follow-up seminar on risk assessment (see Exchange of information in Chapter IV, below).

16. The Bureau further considered that it might be possible to introduce, into the Convention's reporting process, links with indicators under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework. However, it was important to base reporting on the existing indicators under the Convention.<sup>4</sup>

17. Mr. Oprasic asked how the secretariat could support countries in transition to develop action plans for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework.

#### **F. Planned activities of the Bureau in 2017–2018 and organization of work**

18. The Bureau briefly reviewed the tasks assigned to it by the Conference of the Parties, through decisions taken at the ninth meeting. It agreed to provide comments to the secretariat by 14 February 2017 on the draft report of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, which had been circulated in advance of the present meeting.

### **III. Involvement of Parties and other stakeholders**

19. The Bureau took note of information provided by the secretariat on publications and targeted communications, in particular the issue of a brochure, *Cross-border concerns*,

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<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/1\\_en\\_document\\_travail\\_service\\_part1\\_v2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/1_en_document_travail_service_part1_v2.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> More information in indicators and criteria available at <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/ap/tools.html>.

*shared strategies*,<sup>5</sup> and the interest of a television broadcaster in the recently-initiated work on fire-water retention.

20. The Bureau discussed the question of whether to undertake working visits, as foreseen in the workplan, and decided to consider the question further after the planned subregional workshops (Zagreb, 21-23 February 2017, and Minsk, 11-13 April 2017).

#### **IV. Exchange of information**

21. The Bureau agreed to discuss planned activities relating to online reporting, an implementation guide, good practices and a possible seminar on risk assessment in the joint meeting with the Working Group on Implementation.

22. The Bureau discussed the planned activity on land-use planning, which, according to the adopted workplan, should comprise (i) the finalization for publication of the guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects and (ii) the holding of a seminar for exchanging experiences, possibly based on case studies.

23. The Bureau asked the secretariat to circulate again to the Bureau the earlier comments on the draft guidance provided by the working group under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. In addition, the secretariat should circulate to the Bureau the revised draft guidance at the same time as it is shared with the Bureau of the Espoo Convention and its Protocol for its next meeting (Geneva, 23-24 February 2017), prior to its submission to the meetings of the governing bodies for those two treaties (Minsk, 13-16 June 2017). In particular, the Bureau wished to see the wording of a disclaimer expected to be included in the publication. The Bureau members should be provided with a reasonable deadline for providing any comments on the draft.

24. Regarding the planned seminar, it would be important to bring together land-use planning and industrial safety authorities. One possibility would be to showcase examples of past cooperation between land-use planners and industrial safety experts; another, for industry and local planners to talk about challenges and opportunities; yet another, to invite academic speakers; and, yet another, to provide linkages with the community engaged in the Sendai Framework implementation.

25. Belgium (Flanders) and the European Union/European Investment Bank, as supporters of this activity, should be asked by the secretariat about their leadership of this activity and their expectations regarding the seminar. Once the guidance has been finalized (i.e., after June 2017), the secretariat should circulate it to national focal points together with a request that they express their interest in and expectations of this activity and the challenges faced with respect to land-use planning and siting.

26. The secretariat also provided an updated list of industry contacts, as requested by the Bureau at its June 2016 meeting.

#### **V. Strategic partnerships**

27. Mr. Kiriazis provided an update on the activities resulting from the inter-agency coordination meetings on industrial safety as the European Commission is expected to host the next such meeting (Brussels, April/May 2017). He presented a final draft of a joint brochure and explained how the meetings allowed the agencies to explore opportunities for cooperation and to avoid overlap and competition. The next meeting will be important in

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<sup>5</sup> ECE/INF/NONE/2016/2, available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45209>.

bringing together the various agencies in Brussels having an interest in industrial and chemical safety and accidents.

28. The Chair reported on the latest informal meeting between representatives of the governing bodies of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (Geneva, 24 January 2017). The representatives had discussed the follow-up to the eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 6-8 June 2016) and exchanged information on activities related to the 2030 Agenda and news on the opening of the agreements to all Member States of the United Nations. They also discussed the possibility of holding a joint event, initially with the hope to organize one within the framework of the sixty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 26-27 April 2017), but this would not be possible for practical reasons. The representatives also agreed on presentations on their activities related to the 2030 Agenda, to be made the next day in the twenty-second session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (Geneva, 25-27 January 2017), and agreed to meet again the day before the Committee's next session (Geneva, 13 November 2017).

29. The Bureau asked the representatives of the governing bodies of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements to continue to work on the document entitled *Secretariats for ECE multilateral environmental agreements – the way forward*, which appeared to have last been amended in April 2015.

30. The secretariat informed the Bureau on its planned contributions to OECD work on natural-hazard triggered technological (NATECHS) accidents and on quantifying the benefits of regulations on environmental emergencies.

## **VI. Financing and review of the sustainable financial mechanism**

31. The Bureau took note of information provided by the secretariat on actual expenditures in 2016, which corresponded accurately with the information provided to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and on expected income in 2017. The secretariat also presented an informal document setting out the evolution over time of financial contributions made by Parties to the trust fund. The Bureau noted that some Parties have never contributed or contributed well below their economic strength.

32. The Bureau discussed the possible review of the Sustainable Financial Mechanism and decided that the matter was linked with the review of the Convention's long-term strategy. It also considered the establishment once again of a small-group on financing but decided not to proceed at this stage. On both points, the Bureau decided to await the outcome of its initial reflection on the review of the long-term strategy, but would be prepared to decide on next steps at the next meeting (July 2017).

33. Mr. Oprasic asked the secretariat to write to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina to request financial contributions for the bienniums 2015-2016 and 2017-2018, using as a basis for the amount the approved budgets for the two bienniums and the scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the regular budget of the United Nations. In addition, the secretariat should invite Bosnia and Herzegovina to host a meeting of the Bureau as an in-kind contribution.

## **VII. Review of the long-term strategy and development of a communications strategy**

34. The Bureau discussed the review of the long-term strategy of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties had decided that the Bureau should take into consideration the matters raised in the joint UNECE/OECD seminar, the possible opening of the Convention

to Member States of the United Nations not member of UNECE and gender. The Bureau decided that its next meeting would be over two days with the first day dedicated to determining elements for the revised and extended long-term strategy. The strategy should cover the period to 2030 and not exceed four pages in length. It should include a vision that could be developed based on the Bureau's earlier brainstorming exercise to discuss the long-term goals and future strategy of the Convention (thirty-first meeting, CP.TEIA/2015/B.3/Minutes).

35. The Bureau requested the secretariat to circulate to the members the extended informal record of the earlier brainstorming, examples of long-term strategies developed for other UNECE multilateral environmental agreements and the European Union's Environment Action Programme to 2020. Ms. Tandberg will share a strategic document covering OECD work on chemical accidents, if such exists. In addition, in advance of the next meeting, the secretariat should circulate relevant documentation produced under the Convention regarding the joint UNECE/OECD seminar, the possible opening of the Convention and gender.

36. The Bureau asked the secretariat to investigate the availability and cost of a suitable facilitator for the first day of the next meeting. Bureau members agreed to explore possibilities to provide a facilitator in-kind and asked the secretariat to contact Mr. Dadasiewicz, who had offered to host the Bureau's next meeting, regarding this matter also.

37. After discussing the long-term strategy, the Bureau will at its next meeting decide on a schedule for its full drafting and discuss the review of the Sustainable Financial Mechanism and the development of a communications and marketing strategy.

38. Bureau members suggested that an award under the Convention could be an effective communications and marketing tool.

## **VIII. Assistance activities**

39. The Bureau agreed to discuss the improvement of the effectiveness of the Assistance Programme, the implementation of assistance activities, including under the Assistance Programme, and activities related to accidental water pollution in the joint meeting with the Working Group on Implementation.

## **IX. Awareness-raising in and outreach to other regions**

40. The Bureau decided that activities on awareness-raising in and outreach to other regions should continue as previously, taking opportunities that arise. The aim should be to share and promote the use of tools developed under the Convention through piggy-backing events under the other UNECE multilateral environmental agreements, using video- and teleconferencing and engaging Bureau members where possible.

## **X. UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System**

41. The Bureau considered the planned consultation for Points of Contact to review the effectiveness of the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System and discuss preparedness and response for disaster risk reduction. It asked the secretariat to contact the European Union's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) to inquire whether there would be a wish to cooperate in organizing a joint event. Mr. Dadasiewicz, who had previously expressed Poland's interest in hosting a consultation for Points of Contact, should also be contacted by the secretariat on this

matter, which should then be discussed at the Bureau's next meeting. The Bureau also suggested that the secretariat investigate whether such an event could qualify under the call for proposals for prevention and preparedness projects issued annually by ECHO.

42. The secretariat informed the Bureau that in future bienniums US\$10,000 should be budgeted for the maintenance of the Industrial Accident Notification System.

## **XI. Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties**

43. The Bureau did not have any proposals regarding a possible host country for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and therefore asked the secretariat to reserve both interpretation and a meeting room in the Palais des Nations for 27-29 November 2018.

## **XII. Proposed schedule of meetings for 2017**

44. The Bureau decided on its schedule of meetings:

- 4-5 July 2017 in Poland (first day for brainstorming on the long-term strategy)
- 30-31 January 2018 (tentative dates) in Austria (likely close to Vienna)
- The first week of July 2018 in Switzerland (likely outside Geneva).

## **XIII. Closure of the meeting**

45. The Bureau requested the circulation by email of the draft minutes of the meeting, for commenting by its members and subsequent finalization by the secretariat.

46. The Chair closed the meeting on 31 January 2017 at noon.

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