

UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Key conclusions from 2017 subregional workshops on industrial accident prevention: chemicals management, identification and notification of industrial hazardous activities

Subregional workshop for South-Eastern Europe on industrial accidents prevention, Zagreb, Croatia, 21 - 23 February 2017

Main Objectives:

- To increase the administrative capacity in the South-Eastern Europe in the area of identification and notification of hazardous activities, in line with Annex I of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, and the upper-tier requirements of Annex I of the EU Seveso III Directive;
- To identify linkages and synergies with the relevant legislation of the European Union in the area of chemicals management and industrial accident prevention;
- To increase the awareness in the South-Eastern Europe with regard to the sustainable development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.



Zagreb, February 2017

Main observations & conclusions:

Most countries of the subregion have a system in place for the identification of hazardous activities. However, little is done to comply with the requirement to notify of proposed or existing hazardous activities. National systems are not fully in line with the revised Annex I.

- Countries should benefit from the Convention's Assistance Programme and finalize work on self-assessments and national action plans. Meeting with some of the experts from the region could help finalize some of the on-going work on self-assessments and national action plans
- Main linkages between the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and the Seveso III Directive became clearer to workshop participants
- Countries should consider setting up inter-institutional groups with all responsible actors, such as technical inspectorates, ministries of energy, industry, environment and other

competent authorities and involving operators of hazardous facilities in order to improve coordination at the national level

- Countries do not have mechanisms for consultation with neighbouring countries on identification of hazardous activities and there is a need for improved coordination and cooperation regarding identification of hazardous activities and classification of hazardous substances
- Countries would appreciate having a simple guide to the notification of hazardous activities

Subregional workshop for Eastern Europe and Caucasus on industrial accident prevention, Minsk, Belarus, 11 – 13 April 2017

Main Objectives:

- To familiarize the countries in Eastern Europe and Caucasus with the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents in order to enhance industrial safety, safeguard human health and the environment and enhance sub-regional cooperation
- To increase the expert and administrative capacity in the area of identification and notification of hazardous activities, in line with Annex I of the Convention, aligned with the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)
- To increase the awareness of the countries in Eastern Europe and Caucasus with regards to the sustainable development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.



Minsk, April 2017

Main observations & conclusions:

Most countries of the subregion have some system in place for the identification of hazardous activities but it is not fully in line with the requirements of the Convention. No country of the subregion has notified a potentially affected country of such activities. Further allignment with the revised Annex I is needed.

- Importance of including identification of worst case scenarios that may happen on facilities under the Convention was raised by workshop participants
- Participants expressed a need for training on risk assessment techniques
- Some countries are harmonizing their legislation with EU legislation and have to meet strict deadlines to implement various EU directives. It was highlighted that any help (for example, in the form of trainings and workshops, such as on linkages between the Convention and Seveso Directive) is important and would be welcome
- A training on the notification of industrial accidents was requested
- Importance of subregional workshops was highlighted several times as the opportunity to consult experts from other countries

- Several times the need of having an on-line platform for exchange with experts from other countries was highlighted (this can be particularly important for exchange between neighbouring countries which do not have diplomatic relations but are willing to consult each other on technical level)
- It is necessary to improve coordination between various competent authorities at national level
- It was noted by many participants that the practical hands-on training was particularly useful to them.

Key conclusions from the 2017 subregional workshops:

- When establishing national systems for identification and notification of hazardous activities countries should **benefit from experiences of other countries**
- Countries should have **contingency plans for environmental accidents** in place and **increase collaboration with neighbouring countries and with industry** that has installations close to borders
- Countries should **benefit from the Convention's Assistance Programme** and **finalize work on self-assessments and national action plans**
- Countries face a need to **improve coordination between various competent authorities at national level**
- Countries do not have mechanisms for **consultation with neighbouring countries**
- Countries requested having a simple **guide, a template for and a training on the notification of hazardous activities**
- **Linkages between the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and the Seveso III Directive** are important for countries wishing to integrate with the European Union
- **Participants emphasized a need to be in touch and consult each other**, in particular when working on determining potential transboundary effects of hazardous activities
- Countries should enhance efforts to **exchange information and share best practices** on potential transboundary effects arising from their hazardous activities
- The need for having an **on-line platform** for exchange with experts from other countries was identified
- Importance of **subregional workshops** was highlighted as the opportunity to consult experts from other countries. More such workshops, in particular, on notification of hazardous activities and on industrial accidents notification were requested.

Finally, an important point was raised on the margins of the subregional workshops regarding the **inconsistent use of terms “category” and “class” in the Annex I of the Convention**. It was noted that “category” was used indistinctly in the Annex I to refer on one hand to the numbers (1 to 21) used to identify substances and mixtures listed in Part I, and on the other hand, to the classification of these substances and mixtures according to the GHS (e.g. acute toxicity, category 1). The GHS criteria were developed to allow classification and labelling based on “hazard classes” (i.e. hazardous properties) and “hazard categories” (i.e.: degree of hazard within a hazard class). These terms are clearly defined and consistently used in the GHS, and as the GHS has now been implemented in a large number of countries, they are used as defined in the GHS in chemical-related legislation worldwide. It was also noted that the use of these terms referring to different concepts in the Convention is particularly confusing when using the location criteria, which refers to “categories” of substances and mixtures used before the alignment of Annex I to the Convention with the GHS. **It was recommended that Convention's Bureau gives consideration to this issue.**