The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents: scope and main requirements

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Minsk, 11-13 April 2017
Industrial Accidents Convention

• Adopted in 1992, entered into force in 2000
• Negotiated by UNECE member States in response to several major industrial accidents and their transboundary effects (e.g., Sandoz pollution at Schweizerhalle in 1986 affecting all downstream countries along the Rhine)
• Designed to protect people and the environment against industrial accidents
• Helps its Parties to prevent industrial accidents and to prepare for, and respond to, accidents if they occur
• Focus on transboundary cooperation
• 41 Parties
Status of Ratification:
41 Parties (including the EU)
Scope of the Convention

What kind of accidents are dealt with by the Convention?

• involving hazardous activities (manufacture, use, storage, handling, or disposal of hazardous substances)
• capable of causing transboundary effects

A list of substances and categories of substances is included in Annex I to the Convention. The annex was amended at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, December 2014, Geneva.

Examples of hazardous activities:

• Fertilizers plants
• Chemical plants
• Oil storage facilities
Application of the Convention

- Prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents capable of causing transboundary effects
- Cooperation platform (implementation support, mutual assistance, R&D, exchange of information & technology)
Governance and institutional structures: cooperation and coordination between authorities, industry & the public

Competent authority

- Industry
- Emergency Situation
- Environment
- Interior
- Other

Regional level

Local level
Key obligations

• **Identification and notification** of hazardous activities

• Development and implementation of policies, strategies and measures for:
  • **Prevention** of industrial accidents
  • Emergency **preparedness**
  • Emergency **response**, including industrial accidents notification & mutual assistance

• Information to and participation of the public
Prevention:

- Control and monitoring system over the operation of hazardous activities
- Establishment of policies on the siting of new hazardous activities and on significant modifications to such existing activities
Preparedness

• Emergency planning inside and outside industrial installations

• Emergency preparedness measures (Annex VII) pursuant to article 8, which requires development of transboundary emergency plans

• National emergency plans compatible with those of neighbouring countries to be able to respond to transboundary impacts
Response

• Coordination of response within a country and between countries
• Industrial accident notification system
• The Convention encourages Parties to assist each other and cooperate in their response to industrial accidents, as well as in research & development and sharing of information & technology
Information to, and participation of the public

• Adequate **information to be given** to the public in areas capable of being affected by an industrial accident arising out of a hazardous activity

• Public to be provided with **opportunity to participate** in relevant procedures on prevention and preparedness

• Opportunity to be given to the public of affected Party should be equivalent to the public of the Party of origin

• **Access to justice**
The Assistance Programme

- Established in 2004
- **Aim:** To assist countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to address the challenges in implementing the Convention

**Preparatory phase**
- High-level Commitment
- Fact-finding missions
- Awareness-raising missions

**Implementation phase**
- Capacity-building activities
**Assistance Programme**

**Cyclic / Strategic Approach**

1. Define national action plan and implement it
2. Analyze and examine the progress and identify shortcomings
3. Assess the results

Benchmarks on the Implementation of the Convention / Indicators & Criteria

- **Step 1 – Self-Assessment** of national mechanisms, identification of gaps
- **Step 2 – Action plan** to eliminate gaps and improve mechanisms → Project proposals
- **Step 3 – Evaluation of results** achieved through the undertaken actions
Thank you for your attention!

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