

22 May 2019  
English only

---

## **Economic Commission for Europe**

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

#### **Bureau**

##### **Fortieth meeting**

#### **Working Group on Implementation**

##### **Thirty-eighth meeting**

Geneva, 12 February 2019

### **Minutes of the joint meeting**

#### **1. Opening of the joint meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. The fortieth meeting of the Bureau and the thirty-eighth meeting of the Working Group on Implementation under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was jointly held in Geneva, Switzerland, at the Palais des Nations of the United Nations Office at Geneva.
2. The following members of the Bureau attended the meeting: Ms. Torill Tandberg (Norway), Chair; Mr. Michael Struckl (Austria), Vice-Chair; Ms. Jasmina Karba (Slovenia), Vice-Chair; Mr. Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus); Mr. Pavel Forint (Czechia); Mr. Rolf-Jan Hoeve (European Union); Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany); Ms. Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia); and Mr. Martin Merkofer (Switzerland). Ms. Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland) was unable to attend.
3. The following members of the Working Group on Implementation attended the meeting: Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany), Chair; Mr. Pavel Chukharev (Belarus), Vice-Chair; Mr. Raphael Gonzalez (Switzerland), Vice-Chair; Ms. Helena Fridh (Sweden); Ms. Rachel McCann (United Kingdom); Ms. Anneke Raap (Netherlands); Ms. Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia); Ms. Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation); and Ms. Laura Vizbule (Latvia). Mr. Hrvoje Buljan (Croatia) was unable to attend.
4. The joint meeting was serviced by the secretariat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It was preceded by a meeting of the Working Group on Implementation (Geneva, 11 February 2019) and followed by a meeting of the Bureau (Geneva, 13 February 2019).
5. The Bureau and the Working Group adopted the provisional agenda (CP.TEIA/2019/B.1/Agenda and CP.TEIA/2019/WGI.2/Agenda, respectively) without changes.

#### **2. Introductions**

6. The Chair of the Bureau, supported by the secretariat, briefly summarized the key decisions taken at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-10) (Geneva, 4–6 December 2018). The secretariat announced that the report of the tenth meeting (ECE/CP.TEIA/38) and the

list of decisions taken (i.e. the addendum to the report) (ECE/CP.TEIA/38/Add.1) would become available on the meeting webpage<sup>1</sup> in the coming weeks.

### **3. Follow-up activities to the seminar on risk assessment methodologies**

7. The Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting, had mandated the Bureau to determine specific follow-up activities to the seminar on risk assessment methodologies, based on the discussions held at the seminar, the seminar report and the evaluation forms.

8. Mr. Martin Merkofer, member of the small group on risk assessment and of the Bureau, presented the seminar report, prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with the small group, and the potential follow-up activities contained therein for possible future implementation. On this basis, he then presented a project proposal that could be implemented in the current biennium, which incorporates a number of follow-up activities contained in the seminar report. The proposal involves the elaboration of a report on risk assessment methodologies, which would contain, among others: an overview of risk assessment and its benefits; case studies on the use of risk assessment methodologies for a range of hazardous industrial facilities (e.g. oil terminals, LNG/LPG storage tanks, and refrigeration installations); transboundary case examples of the use of risk assessment methodologies; a summary table on risk assessment methodologies used by countries in the UNECE region; and a list of software tools currently available for the application of risk assessment. Risk assessment methodologies can support national policies on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances. Therefore, the findings are also of interest of the EU Seveso community and could maybe be shared via future Seveso Expert Group (SEG) meetings.

9. Mr. Merkofer, on behalf of the small group, thanked the secretariat for the excellent preparation of the seminar report and recommended that the elaboration of the proposed report on risk assessment methodologies be undertaken by a consultant, with the support of the small group and the secretariat. He confirmed that Switzerland had planned to earmark funding of its regular contribution to the work on risk assessment.

10. The Bureau and Working Group thanked the small group for developing the project proposal and expressed appreciation to Switzerland for committing funding to such a project. They agreed to the implementation of this proposal in the current biennium (2019–2020) and requested the small group to report back on the progress made at the next Bureau meeting. The secretariat noted that it would gladly continue to support the work on risk assessment, with the understanding that the related costs to that effect would be covered by the Swiss contribution. Mr. Merkofer mentioned, that this point needed to be discussed between Switzerland and the secretariat bilaterally in the light of the budget that Switzerland had planned for this activity. In regard to the proposal for a possible review of the location criteria in view of the various risk assessment methodologies, the Bureau and Working Group members decided to postpone this activity until a future biennium, once higher priority follow-up activities have been implemented.

11. A consultant to the secretariat presented a summary of the evaluation forms completed by the participants of the seminar and received by the secretariat, including results of the ratings and the proposals for follow-up activities, as contained in the seminar report. Overall, the evaluations were very positive, with 90 per cent of the total number of ratings being “very satisfactory” or “satisfactory”. The participants considered the seminar very useful in providing a sound overview of risk assessment methodologies and sharing experiences in this field. At the same time, the comments showed that there was a need to further exchange information and experience on this topic, especially to learn more about and discuss the details and underlying assumptions of the methodologies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=46249>.

12. The Bureau and Working Group thanked the small group and the secretariat for the successful organization of the seminar and for the preparation of the seminar report, which was circulated by the secretariat in advance of the meeting.

13. The small group expressed interest in expanding the membership of the group and invited those present at the meeting, especially Russian-speaking representatives, to join. Mr. Baranovsky (Belarus),<sup>2</sup> Ms. Vizbule (Latvia), Ms. Stamenkovic (Serbia) and Ms. Milutinovic (Serbia) joined as new members of the small group, and the Chair of the Bureau welcomed them.

#### **4. Assistance activities**

14. The joint meeting discussed assistance activities, including those under the Convention's Assistance and Cooperation Programme and other assistance activities.

##### **(a) Improving the effectiveness of the Assistance Programme**

15. The secretariat recalled that the Conference of the Parties, at its ninth meeting, had endorsed three steps to improve the effectiveness of the Assistance Programme. In particular, the second step foresaw that the Bureau and Working Group work together to request high-level feedback from the Programme's beneficiary countries with regard to their progress made and specific needs for future assistance. Based on this feedback, among other inputs, the two bodies should then consider the further development of the Programme with regard to its design and appeal for both beneficiary countries and donors, including the possibility to organize a high-level meeting in the framework of the next meeting of CoP.

16. Mr. Iberl, Chair of the Working Group from Germany, presented the feedback received from beneficiary countries of the Assistance Programme, as also contained in the pre-session document on the activities of the Working Group on Implementation in 2017/2018 (ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/11, annex II). He highlighted, supported by the secretariat, that most replies received were informal, not high-level, and that beneficiary countries experience frequent changes in personnel with mostly no transfer of knowledge happening between the predecessor and his successor. He also pointed out that no country had yet submitted a project proposal, following their preparation of a self-assessment and action plan. The secretariat had stepped in to prepare proposals to bridge this gap between needs and demands.

17. The joint meeting then reviewed the implementation of steps 2 and 3, notably which steps to take based on the responses to the high-level letters and to consider the possible organization of a high-level meeting in the framework of CoP-11, or another meeting/assistance activity. The joint meeting acknowledged that while the Assistance Programme with its tools under the Strategic Approach was excellent, the challenging situation in the countries seemed to prevent in most cases the effective use of the available tools by beneficiary countries. The joint meeting noted that the assumption that countries would independently apply these tools was too optimistic, stressing that the application of the Strategic Approach was very successful in countries where experts and the secretariat provided support in their use as part of multi-year projects, as demonstrated by the project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia (2016–2019).

18. The joint meeting then reflected on the need for a high-level meeting and possible topics for such a meeting, including related to tailings safety, progress made by beneficiary countries towards graduating from the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, etc. The joint meeting remained open as to whether a high-level or technical meeting be organized as part of CoP-11 in 2020, seeing advantages in both possibilities, and it suggested that a more thorough discussion on the objectives, format and possible topics of the meeting be held at

---

<sup>2</sup> Confirmation of membership received following the meeting.

the next meeting of the Bureau, based on further background information – in particular, as Germany was in the process of organizing a site visit, linked to a specific theme. Possible themes discussed that might be of interest to all Parties were those of exchanging experience on transboundary cooperation on specific topics, such as on NATECH accident prevention. The Working Group expressed its readiness to contribute to the preparations of CoP-11, in particular to a high-level or technical meeting or a specific segment on the Assistance and Cooperation Programme.

**(b) Implementation of assistance activities, including under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme**

19. The secretariat informed the Bureau and the Working Group of the envisaged assistance activities in 2019–2020, as per the workplan adopted by CoP-10; notably:

(a) Sub-regional workshops on land-use planning and industrial safety in (i) Eastern Europe and the Caucasus in 2019, and (ii) in South-Eastern Europe in 2020 (tbc), funded with earmarked French additional support for this biennium and additional funding for the travel of participants from the regular budget;

(b) Projects to strengthen the safety of mining operations, in particular tailings management facilities (TMFs), in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and beyond in Central Asia, funded by Switzerland;

(c) Finalization of the implementation guide for Central Asia and issuance as a United Nations publication;

(d) Technical mission to support the accession process by Ukraine.

20. At the same time, the secretariat highlighted that co-financing, in particular for the activity costs, was important to ensure the full implementation of these activities, in addition to the continued core activities the secretariat was engaged in, such as the servicing of intergovernmental bodies. Further financing for the conduct of additional activities under the Strategic Approach – for example for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia – was needed. The secretariat pointed out that there was great uncertainty early in the biennium with respect to the projects funded by donors, and the availability of funding to support the implementation of assistance activities under the workplan.

21. The secretariat also highlighted that funding was required to launch national policy dialogues (NPDs) on industrial safety, as per the Convention’s long-term strategy, which had been requested to be implemented by three beneficiary countries formally (Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova and Serbia), with others having expressed such needs informally. Such NPDs would help meet country needs and enhance industrial safety governance. The European Union, Norway and the Russian Federation had been approached to fund regional NPD programmes. Ms. Tandberg, Chair of the Bureau from Norway and Mr. Hoeve, Bureau member of the European Union, indicated to be willing to facilitate possible follow-up actions.

22. The joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group took note of and endorsed the assistance activities planned to be implemented for the period 2019–2020. At the same time, it acknowledged the need for additional financing of planned and other possible activities and projects, and Bureau members agreed to follow-up and seek additional financing in this respect.

**(c) Other assistance activities**

23. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei, co-Chair of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents and German Bureau member, provided an update on the implementation of assistance activities relating to improving tailings safety and preventing accidental water pollution included in the workplan which were ongoing and planned to be implemented in-

kind by ICPDR with financing by the German Environment Agency. In particular, he reported that the project on improving tailings safety in the Danube region, which was also in line with the workplan on fostering cooperation with Joint River Bodies, had started in March 2019 with Phase one in Romania and that it was envisaged to continue that project in Serbia next year. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei pointed out that the tools, which had been worked out in previous projects under the Convention to enhance the safety of tailings management facilities (TMFs), proved very valid for all UNECE countries. In particular, the Checklist-Methodology and the Tailings Hazard Index (THI) were essential elements for training operators and inspectors, with the THI being very useful for creating TMF inventories and subsequent maps to identify the most hazardous TMF regions in UNECE countries. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei also explained that the Checklist Methodology would be further developed and improved, notably to integrate elements for land-use and contingency planning to achieve a better risk-based approach. The meeting welcomed the information provided.

24. The secretariat presented a background paper on the linkages between the projects on tailings safety implemented under the Convention's workplan, prepared based on the request expressed by the Bureau at its last meeting (Geneva, 3 December 2018). The Chair and other Bureau members welcomed the proposal prepared by the secretariat, in response to its request, which they found to bring more clarity and transparency to the TMF-related work under the Convention's workplan.

25. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei recalled that he had shared the terms of reference, including a detailed project proposal and budget, for the Caucasian and Danube tailings projects implemented by the German Environment Agency in-kind under the Convention's workplan with the Bureau. He requested a similar approach for other projects. The secretariat highlighted that it matched donor offers with recognized country needs and that the secretariat – in the absence of funding provided by Parties – had taken a proactive role in this respect, to ensure that projects were being developed and implemented. It recalled that it had always kept the Bureau and the Working Group informed about on-going projects and planned activities, carried out in response to country needs, as per the Convention's workplans, adopted by the CoPs, and that it was planning to keep up this information sharing, with the understanding that the Chairs of both bodies were content with that process.

26. Several members of the Bureau mentioned that it was sufficient that the projects, along with their overall budget, were included in the Convention's workplan and that there was no need for sharing detailed project proposals, which were mostly of interest to the secretariat and donors. On this basis, the Bureau and the Working Group agreed to keep to the practice of information-sharing by the secretariat on ongoing and planned activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme.

27. Mr. Merkofer, Swiss Bureau member, expressed appreciation to the work of the secretariat in managing the Swiss-funded projects on improving the safety of mining operations, in particular TMFs, in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and beyond in Central Asia. He highlighted the trust by Switzerland in the secretariat's work and that further to the ongoing exchange of information between Switzerland and UNECE, no more detailed information was required by the Swiss side.

28. As regards the further activities Germany was planning to implement in Central Asia under the Convention, Mr. Winkelmann-Oei explained that these were not yet determined as no official request for cooperation and technical assistance has been received to date from the respective countries. At the moment there was only an informal note by Kyrgyzstan for a TMF training activity.

29. The joint meeting took note of the information presented. It expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for its fundraising efforts and for having prepared the background paper. The joint meeting welcomed the past, ongoing and planned activities on tailings safety under the framework of the Convention, including the coordination among the various actors.

## **5. Closure of the joint meeting**

30. The Chairs of the two bodies closed the meeting on 12 February at 5:15 p.m. They expressed their thanks to the secretariat for effective preparations of relevant background information, and thanked Bureau and Working Group members for their contributions to the discussions.

---