



Convention on the Protection and Use of  
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management  
Fifth meeting  
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Item 14 of the provisional agenda

**ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES SUBMITTED BY THE UNECE  
MEMBER STATES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON:**

**TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS:  
PRIORITY NEEDS OF UNECE COUNTRIES**

**I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Realizing that the major industrial accidents may cause far-reaching transboundary effects and may lead to accidental water pollution, the Signatories to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) and the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) decided to cooperate on issues related to the prevention of accidental pollution of transboundary waters by establishing in 1998 the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG).

2. In recent years, the JEG encountered some difficulties in carrying out its mandate. As a result, the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention adopted at its fifth session (10-12 November 2009, Geneva) the Strategy for the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents. Moreover, in its efforts to revitalize the work under the JEG and to bring it closer to countries needs, the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention decided to carry out a survey in order to identify priority activities in the area of water and industrial accidents.

3. This questionnaire was addressed to the focal points of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. It was disseminated by the secretariat at the end of April 2010 and the deadline for submission of the completed questionnaires was set as June 18, 2010.

4. The questionnaire invited countries to express their priority needs and to propose specific activities related to water and industrial accidents in the transboundary context. It is expected that the responses will help to tailor to the requirements of countries the work to be carried out by the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents by providing the basis for a decision by the Bureaux of both Conventions on one or more priority activities for 2010-2012 in this area in accordance with the Strategy for Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents.

**II. THE SUMMARY OF PROVIDED RESPONSES**

21 June 2010

5. The Questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I provided for identification of up to three priority issues for each country. Part II provided for identification of specific activity(ies) that should be implemented to address the three priority issues mentioned in part I.

6. To date, the completed questionnaires were submitted by 13 Parties (Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, and Ukraine) to the Water Convention and two non-Parties (Georgia and Armenia). Moreover, Switzerland has not completed the questionnaire but indicated that there are currently no priority or important needs of this country related to this issue.

7. To provide some quantitative insight on the issues raised in Part 1 of the questionnaire, the number of times each corresponding issue was mentioned by the respondents was identified and summarized in the table below (only priority and important issues).

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Priority Issues</b> which have not yet been solved and require further joint work <b><u>(choose up to three issues)</u></b>	<b>Important issues</b> which are relevant but already being managed	<b>Not a priority issues</b> which are either irrelevant or already fully managed
Institutional structures for transboundary/basin wide cooperation	2	9	
Water quality/quantity monitoring, classification, intercalibration/ compatible data outputs	1	11	
Data exchange	1	7	
Alarm systems/Notification/Information exchange	5	5	
Contingency planning/harmonisation	7	4	
Tailing Dams Management (incl. orphan/abandoned sites)	1	6	
Wastewaters treatment	4	6	
Fire protection		5	
Pipelines management		6	
Natural disasters (e.g. land slides, avalanches)		4	
Flood management	2	10	
Drought management	1	6	

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Trans-shipment of hazardous substances	2	5	
Siting of hazardous installations		8	
Impact studies/risk assessment	1	9	
Response exercises	2	6	
<b>Basic Safety Measures</b>	2		

8. It is evident that the respondent countries have identified Alarm systems, Contingency planning, and Wastewater treatment as prioritized issues. While the latter of these issues was mostly mentioned as a priority by non-EU countries and required mostly national level activities and technical capacity building, the former two issues were mentioned both by EU and non-EU countries and present a good opportunity for transboundary joint work.

9. Both Alarm systems and Contingency Planning were mainly identified as issues that need to be dealt with on international and/or basin-wide level. Several respondents identified need for a more active cooperation between neighbouring States on these issues with legal and technical aspects pointed out as the most relevant for consideration.

10. Organization of workshops and establishment of expert groups were mentioned mostly as the required format for joint activities in the issues of Alarm systems and Contingency planning. Elaboration of technical manuals and policy recommendations were most frequently spelled out as possible outcomes of such activities. Some non-EU countries also underlined the lack of technical capacity to deal sufficiently with these two issues.

11. Among other priority issues that are considered by the Member States to have potential for transboundary cooperation are Flood Management, Trans-shipment of hazardous substances, Response exercises, and Institutional structure for transboundary water management. The former and latter of these are considered by some States to have potential to be dealt with on basin-wide level within existing River basin management bodies or by establishing new ones. For example, such need is expressed by the countries of Caucasus.

12. The issue of Trans-shipment of hazardous substances also has potential for bilateral cooperation by establishment of bilateral working or expert groups and/or commissions. The need of conducting of joint response exercises is also expressed by some States.

13. Two EU countries have identified *Basic Safety Measures* as another priority issue not mentioned originally in the questionnaire. This need is recognized with the reference to the EU Water Framework Directive but is believed to be relevant to non-EU countries too. Possible activities proposed by the States include organization of workshops to come up with concrete procedures/check lists/policies to implement the basic safety measures to prevent the occurrence

of industrial accidents that can lead to contamination of water.

## **II. POSSIBLE FUTURE STEPS**

14. The responses provided by countries indicate some common most prioritized issues in the area of water and industrial accidents. Alarm systems, Contingency planning and Wastewater treatment are the most frequently cited issues. A lot of possibilities for transboundary cooperation exist in all of these three areas. While the latter of these three issues were mostly identified by non-EU countries, the former two aspects present particular interest also as areas of interaction between EU and non-EU countries, for instance, on a basin-wide level.

15. It is expected that based on the priorities identified by the UNECE Member States in the responses to the present questionnaire, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management will agree on possible future activities in this area of work taking also into account the strategy of the Joint Expert Group as adopted at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

16. The recommendations of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management can further provide a basis for a decision by the two Bureaux on one or more priority activities for 2010-2012 in this area.