

24 February 2017
English only

Economic Commission for Europe

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

Bureau

Thirty-fifth meeting

Working Group on Implementation

Thirty-second meeting

Geneva, 31 January 2017

Minutes of the joint meeting

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The thirty-fifth meeting of the Bureau under the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the thirty-second meeting of the Convention's Working Group on Implementation were held jointly at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The joint meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Bureau¹ and followed by a meeting of the Working Group on Implementation.²

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 following members of the Working Group on Implementation were present:

- Pavel Chukharev (Belarus)

¹ Information on the Bureau meeting is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45018>.

² Information on the meeting of the Working Group is available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44036>.

- Hrvoje Buljan (Croatia)
- Leo Iberl (Germany)
- Laura Vizbule (Latvia)
- Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation)
- Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia)
- Raphael Gonzalez (Switzerland)
- Rachel McCann (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Peter Westerbeek (Netherlands) and Helena Fridh (Sweden) were absent.

4. The meeting was serviced by the secretariat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
5. The Bureau and Working Group adopted without changes the provisional agenda (CP.TEIA/2017/B.2/Agenda–CP.TEIA/2017/WGI.1/Agenda), as prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Bureau.
6. The members of the Bureau and the Working Group introduced themselves.
7. The members of the Working Group on Implementation elected Mr. Iberl as their Chair.
8. The meeting was chaired jointly by Ms. Karba and Mr. Iberl.

II. Exchange of information

9. The joint meeting discussed planned activities relating to online reporting, an implementation guide, good practices and a possible seminar on risk assessment, as included in the workplan adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its ninth meeting (ECE/CP.TEIA/32, forthcoming).

10. The joint meeting discussed the financing and development of an online system for national implementation reporting, to be implemented with the support of the Working Group on Implementation. It noted the lack of dedicated funds for development and subsequent maintenance of a bespoke online reporting system. The meeting requested the secretariat to present to the next meeting of the Working Group a range of possible off-the-shelf, freely-available solutions. The secretariat should bear in mind a number of criteria:

- (a) The possibility for multiple authorities in a country to collaborate in drafting a national implementation report prior to its submission;
- (b) The availability of the report template or questionnaire in at least English and Russian;
- (c) The possibility to work offline, thus not being dependent on a permanent Internet connection during drafting of the national implementation report;
- (d) The limitation of what information can be provided in the report template or questionnaire, in terms of format and length.

11. The joint meeting then discussed the development of an implementation guide, while noting that no Party or organization had offered to lead this activity and no dedicated financing was available. The secretariat indicated that a more focused implementation guide was expected to be developed in 2017-2018 within the project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia through the implementation of and accession to the Convention. The meeting suggested that the guide for Central Asian countries might subsequently be expanded to be relevant to all countries in the UNECE region, including by

consolidating within it decisions by the Conference of the Parties relating to implementation and by cross-referencing existing guidance materials.

12. Possible arrangements for a seminar on risk assessment methodologies, intended to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practices among Parties, were discussed by the participants. They recalled that the Working Group on Implementation had concluded that there was a need to share experiences in this field, but also that the wide breadth of the field meant that the scope of the seminar should be carefully defined. There was no overlap foreseen with the European Union Chemical Accident Risks Seminar, to be held at Ispra, Italy, from 14-15 June 2017. Links could be made with the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Participants also suggested that OECD countries might be interested to contribute to the seminar, together with the European Union's Joint Research Centre and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

13. The participants agreed that the organization of the seminar should be supported by both the Bureau and the Working Group. The seminar would likely be held back-to-back with the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Mr. Merkofer and Mr. Struckl volunteered to join a small group to draft a concept paper for the seminar, to be shared with both bodies. Others were invited to join the small group by informing the secretariat by 15 February 2017.

III. Assistance activities

A. Improving the effectiveness of the Assistance Programme

14. The Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation 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 the two bodies working 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 the Conference of the Parties.

15. The joint meeting then reviewed a draft letter to the beneficiary countries, as prepared by the secretariat. Suggestions were made on the drafting, including the use of a more polite tone, while at the same time being more inquisitive about the obstacles to implementation of the Convention. The participants agreed to provide additional comments on the draft letter by 15 February 2017.

16. The joint meeting also considered that different approaches were needed to gather the necessary information on the Assistance Programme, through both the formal letter and informal bilateral discussions with beneficiary countries and through contacts at both senior and working levels. The text of the letter to individual countries would need to be adjusted according to whether direct contacts had already been made.

17. The Bureau and the Working Group asked the secretariat to issue the letters as soon as possible. If sufficient information is gathered in time for the Bureau's next meeting, in July 2017, the results should be presented on that occasion. If not, the results should be presented at the Bureau's meeting at the start of 2018. The Chair of the Bureau explained to the Working Group members that the Chair or a Vice-Chair of the Working Group normally attends meetings of the Bureau to ensure coordination on matters such as this.

18. The joint meeting discussed briefly how to improve the financing of the Assistance Programme.

B. Implementation of activities, including under the Assistance Programme

19. The secretariat provided an update on planned assistance activities under the current workplan, in particular regarding the project on strengthening industrial safety in Central Asia. A participant encouraged the secretariat to submit a possible follow-up to the Danube Delta project in response to an expected call for proposals under the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism. The secretariat noted the interest of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, as well as the three countries concerned, in such a follow-up project.

20. The secretariat also shared information it had received on a twinning project between Austria and Georgia, which would address the Convention, as well as the European Union's Industrial Emissions and Seveso III Directives.³ Further, the secretariat shared information provided electronically by Mr. Winkelmann-Oei regarding a German-funded project. The project definition had been amended to address outcomes of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, by extending it to include training on the safety of tailings management facilities in Armenia as well as Georgia, with additional participation from Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The project would test the new *Checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters* on the Debed River, which flows from Armenia into Georgia. Finally, the project would use the earlier *Safety guidelines and good practices for Tailings Management Facilities* and prior work on a hazard rating index, possibly leading to legislative proposals.

21. The Bureau wished to receive the revised terms of reference of the German-funded project and clarification of whether this activity now overlapped with activities related to accidental water pollution (see next item).

C. Activities related to accidental water pollution

22. In the absence of Mr. Winkelmann-Oei, co-Chair of the Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, the secretariat provided an update on the activities relating to accidental water pollution. Specifically, an expert group on fire-water retention had been established, met on 17 January 2017, agreed on the process for the development of guidance on fire-water retention and will meet again on 21 June and 6 September 2017.

23. The secretariat also reported that the Joint Expert Group would meet on 18 May 2017 in Ukraine, back-to-back with the final workshop of the German-funded project on enhancing knowledge on industrial safety at universities (Dnipro, 16-17 May 2017). In addition, Germany and Poland, together with the International Commission for the Protection of the Oder against Pollution, will hold a transboundary exercise on 4 September 2017, back to back with a workshop on prevention strategies at hazardous industries for fire protection on 5 September (and with the meeting of the expert group on fire-water retention on 6 September). A second transboundary exercise is to be organized by Hungary in the first half of 2018.

³ Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC, respectively.

24. The joint meeting welcomed the progress made and took note of the information provided.

V. Closure of the meeting

25. The Bureau and the Working Group requested the circulation by email of the draft minutes of their joint meeting, for commenting by their members and subsequent finalization by the secretariat.

26. The Chairs closed the meeting on 31 January 2017 at 5 p.m.
