

Bureau of the Conference of the Parties

MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING¹

Introduction

1. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents held its third meeting in Chisinau on 8 November 2002.
2. The meeting was attended by Mr. Ernst Berger (Switzerland), Mr. Ludwig Dinkloh (Germany), Mr. Pal Popeylak (Hungary), Mr. Ulf Bjurman (Sweden), Mr. Jürgen Wettig (European Commission), and Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak - Secretary of the CoP.

I. Opening

3. Mr. Berger, Chairperson of the CoP, opened the third meeting of the Bureau in the afternoon of 8 November 2003, immediately following the second meeting of the CoP (6-8 November) in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. He expressed the opinion that the CoP meeting was concluded successfully and that a constructive spirit accompanied the deliberations during the meeting. He also recalled the key decisions taken at the second meeting of the CoP, particularly those, which define the priorities for future activities of the CoP to strengthen the implementation and therefore require action from the Bureau in the coming months. Then the following main issues were discussed.

II. Report of the second meeting of the CoP

4. It was agreed that the secretariat would prepare a draft of the report of the second meeting of the CoP and then ask for comments from the Bureau members, so that the substantive aspects of the report could be completed by the end of December 2002.

¹ Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties.

III. Second round of reporting on the Convention's implementation – Working Group on Implementation

5. The Bureau reviewed decision 2002/1 on strengthening the implementation of the convention taken by the CoP meeting and decided on the necessary actions to be taken.

6. The secretariat - with the support of the Chairperson – should draft a letter for the Executive Secretary of the UNECE to contact those Parties which have not submitted their report on implementation to urge them to comply with their reporting obligations.

7. Mr. Wettig informed the Bureau on the plan of future activities and meetings of the Working Group on Implementation in order to meet the requirements addressed to the Group by the CoP at its second meeting, and in particular to prepare the second report on the Convention's implementation.

8. The Bureau was in agreement that the Working Group should commence work on clarifying the reporting format, as mandated by the CoP, very soon as to facilitate the distribution of the modified reporting format to the countries in the first part of 2003. It requested the secretariat to disseminate the new reporting format to all UNECE member countries.

9. The Bureau agreed that the Working Group should further concentrate on compiling the second report on the implementation of the Convention for consideration at the third meeting of the CoP and participate in the preparations and actively follow up the outcome of the subregional workshop to take place in Erevan in March 2003.

IV. Subregional workshop on the implementation of the Convention in Erevan (Armenia) on 13-15 March 2003

10. The Bureau expressed its commitment to assist the efforts of the Caucasian and Central Asian UNECE member countries aimed at ratifying and implementing the Convention and the great importance it thus attaches to this workshop and especially to its outcome. In this context the Bureau decided that all its members would participate and play an active role in the workshop as speakers sharing the experience in the implementation of the Convention in their countries as well as to draw up the workshops conclusions, including elements for an internationally supported assistance programme.

11. The Bureau was informed on the status of the practical preparations for the workshop and agreed that Mr. Berger and Mr. Ludwiczak would assume the responsibility of finalizing the preparations working together with the host authorities.

12. The Bureau discussed the financial support for the workshop on the basis of a preliminary budget. It agreed that the organization of the workshop as well as participation of three experts (representing the prevention and response authorities and the industry sector) from each of the eight selected counties would be financed

from the resources under the Convention. An estimated budget of USD 30,000 was agreed upon.

V. Joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents

13. Mr. Ludwiczak informed the Bureau that consultations are under way with the Russian Federation on holding the fourth meeting of the joint expert group in that country.

14. The Bureau reiterated the importance of the joint expert group and the outcome of its work. It agreed that apart from addressing the ongoing work plan, the results of its work on new tasks requested by the CoP would be an important step forward facilitating future important decisions by the CoP. The Bureau agreed and requested the Co-Chairmen of the joint expert group and the Secretary to ensure that the issues raised at the second meeting of the CoP would be taken up by the group at its next meeting. These issues are:

(a) Reviewing and providing guidance on the location criterion related to the water path contained in the Guidelines to facilitate the identification and notification of hazardous activities for the purpose of the Convention; and

(b) Reviewing the process of the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Hamburg seminar.

VI. Joint Bureau Meeting with the Bureau of the water convention

15. The Bureau entrusted the Chairperson and the secretariat to investigate the possibility of organizing in early spring 2003 a joint Bureau meeting with the Bureau of the Water Convention to discuss – among others – the following important common issues:

(a) Decisions taken by the CoP regarding work to be done by the joint expert group in the coming two years;

(b) Support (in-kind and financial) of the work of the joint expert group;

(c) Preparation of the second joint special session in the framework of the fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Kiev (Ukraine) on 21 – 23 May 2003, if the ongoing negotiation process of the protocol on civil liability for transboundary damage caused by hazardous activities could be finished successfully by January or February 2003.

VII. Consultation among points of contact within the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System

16. The Bureau was in agreement that such a consultation would be an important element in its work plan and that it should take place as soon as possible and suggested the fall of 2003. It also suggested that the event comprises a training

module for the points of contact. The Bureau requested the secretariat to coordinate the preparations for this meeting, in close contact with the authorities of Slovakia, which have put forward their willingness to host it.

VIII. Plan of meetings/workshops in 2002/2003

17. The following meetings/workshops are envisaged to take place in 2002:

11-13 November	Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Civil Liability (Geneva)
15-17 January	Sixth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Civil Liability (Geneva)
13-15 March	Subregional workshop on the implementation of the Convention (Erevan)
15 March	Fourth meeting of the Bureau (Erevan)
May	Second joint special session of the governing bodies of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions (Kiev)
September/October	Fourth meeting of the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents (Russian Federation)
October	Consultation among the points of contact for the purpose of accident notification and mutual assistance within the UNECE Industrial Accident Notifications System (Slovakia)
November	Second meeting of the Working Group on Implementation

IX. Fourth and future meetings of the Bureau

18. The Bureau decided that it would hold its fourth meeting in conjunction with the subregional workshop in Erevan (Armenia) on Saturday afternoon, 15 March 2003.

X. Closing of the meeting

19. Mr. Berger concluded the third meeting of the Bureau by thanking all its members for their active participation in the second meeting of the CoP and this Bureau meeting and expressed his hope to see everyone at the subregional workshop in Erevan. He also expressed appreciation to the Secretary of the Convention for his input to the CoP and Bureau meetings.