

Working Group on Implementation

**Eighth meeting
Karlstad, 15-16 April 2008**

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING¹

Introduction

1. The eighth meeting of the Working Group on Implementation (WGI) was held in Karlstad (Sweden) on 15-16 April 2008 at the invitation of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency.
2. The following members of the WGI attended the meeting: Mr. Gunnar Hem (Norway) chairman of WGI, Mr. Pavel Forint (Czech Republic), Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany), Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania) and Ms. Helena Nasslander (Sweden). Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski, officer in charge for the Industrial Accidents Convention and Ms. Virginia Fusé, secretariat also attended.
3. Ms. Anna Balakireva (Russian Federation) and Mr. Tomas Trcka (Slovakia) did not attend.
4. Ms. Ausra Sablinskiene (Lithuania) has left the Fire and Rescue Department of the Ministry of Interior and is no longer available as member of the WGI.
5. Ms. Katalin Gorog (Hungary) participated in the meeting in place of Judit Mogor (Hungary), who has left the National Directorate General for Disaster Management in Hungary.
6. In addition Mr. Lajos Katai-Urban (Hungary), Vice-chairperson of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) took part in the meeting to support the work of WGI.

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

7. Mr. Hem opened the eighth meeting. He then thanked Ms. Nasslander and the Swedish Rescue Services Agency for inviting the WGI to Karlstad and for hosting the meeting.
8. The WGI adopted the agenda for its eighth meeting. Mr. Hem expressed his gratitude to the members present to have agreed with the proposed work distribution for evaluation of the national reports. He also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Katai-Urban for his support rendered to WGI in absence of Mr. Trcka, who could not participate and carry out his evaluation due to health problems.

II. Status of the fourth round of reporting on implementation

9. Mr. Wyrowski informed that the secretariat initiated the fourth reporting round on the Convention's implementation by letter of 22 August 2007, accompanied by the reporting

¹ Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Group on Implementation.

format in English, French or Russian. The deadline for submission of the national implementation reports was set for 31 January 2008. Countries that did not meet the deadline were sent several e-mail reminders from the secretariat. Despite it, Albania and the Russian Federation did not provide their reports at the time of the eighth meeting of the WGI being the only two Parties not complying with the reporting obligation. Also Tajikistan, as a country who expressed its commitment among others towards reporting (High-level Commitment meeting, Geneva, 14-15 December 2005) did not submit its national implementation report.

10. National implementation reports were submitted from:

- a) 35 out of 37 Parties (Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as European Community).
- b) 7 countries of Eastern-Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) not yet Parties, in accordance with their commitment expressed at the High-level Commitment meeting (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, TFYR of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan);
- c) 1 other UNECE member state (Turkey)

11. Three Parties: Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal, who ratified the Convention only in 2006 reported on the implementation of the Convention for the first time within the fourth round.

12. The reports submitted in French or Russian were translated into English. An external translator was hired to translate 7 reports from Russian, instead the secretariat within its own capacity translated 4 reports from French.

13. The WGI expressed its satisfaction that 35 Parties as well as 8 other UNECE member states made their reports available in time for the evaluation. At the same time WGI expressed its concern that it had not been able to assess the reports from Albania, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan by the time of its meeting. In particular WGI was dissatisfied with the Russian Federation's omission in submitting the national report since it was the third consecutive time when Russian Federation did not present its report in time to be considered by the WGI.

14. The WGI decided to send formal letters to the relevant ministries in Albania, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan to inform them that they had failed to submit their national implementation reports in time for the assessment and to urge them to comply with their reporting obligation as Parties (Albania and Russian Federation) or the commitment expressed (Tajikistan). The WGI set 16 May as an ultimate deadline for the submission of the missing reports.

III. Review of individual country implementation reports

15. The WGI in preparation to its meeting agreed to analyse the national reports on the basis of the following work distribution: Legislation – Mr. Pavel Forint (Czech Republic) and Mr.

Gunnar Hem, Problems and obstacles to ratification/implementation – Mr. Gunnar Hem and the secretariat, Identification of hazardous activities – Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany) and Ms. Helena Nasslander (Sweden), Prevention of industrial accidents – Mr. Lajos Katai-Urban (Hungary) and the secretariat in absence of Mr. Treka and Ms. Balakireva, Emergency preparedness – Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania) and Ms. Katalin Gorog (Hungary), Participation of the public – Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy).

16. According to the agreed organisation of work the WGI members presented their evaluation of the respective parts of the national reports. They made their assessment in view of the recommendations and conclusions as contained in the third report on implementation of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/2) as well as the criteria for quantitative and qualitative evaluation, developed by the WGI at its fifth meeting.
17. Each evaluation of the respective parts of the national reports was discussed by the WGI and the Group drew a number of conclusions, which will be reflected in the fourth overall implementation report.
18. The WGI found above all that there are no major changes to the previous reporting round. The reports of Western countries confirm good level of Convention's implementation, whereas reports of EECCA and SEE show the problems and obstacles that these countries face in strengthening the implementation of the Convention as well as list their needs for assistance.
19. The WGI supports therefore the work carried out under the Assistance Programme, which is aimed at strengthening the efforts of EECCA and SEE countries in implementing the Convention. The WGI will contain in its fourth overall report a list of EECCA and SEE countries' problems and obstacles linked to assistance needs, which will be grouped accordingly to working areas under the Convention, as they were defined for the capacity-building activity under the Assistance Programme organized in Kyiv in December 2007.
20. Having discussed the quality of reporting WGI found that it is still not satisfactory. Therefore efforts should be made to ensure better quality of reporting for the subsequent reporting rounds. To this end further training for focal points or elaboration of guidelines should be considered. Reference indicators could be also very valuable, however WGI appreciates the time and work needed to develop these indicators.
21. For this reporting round, in case of unclear information and in order to clarify it WGI members should contact the person in charge of compiling the report.

IV. Organisation of further work

22. The WGI decided that members and the secretariat would prepare draft texts of their respective sections and submit them to the chairman and the secretariat. The contributions received will be then evaluated and used for the first overall draft report to be compiled by the chairman in cooperation with the secretariat.
23. The WGI agreed on the following timetable for the preparation of the fourth implementation report:
 - a) 30 April – submission of general contributions by the members;

- b) 16 May – the preliminary first draft of the report is sent to the WGI members;
- c) 31 May – deadline for the submission of comments to the preliminary first draft of the report.

V. Future reporting on implementation, changes to reporting format

- 24. The WGI had an interesting discussion related to future reporting on implementation and possible changes in the reporting format. The WGI concluded that changes in the reporting format or reporting mechanism need to be considered in connection to other developments under the Convention. As such WGI considered the strategic plan for the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme and its possible adoption, in particular that the strategic plan asks for development of reference indicators. Nevertheless, even in that case any changes to reporting format require a careful evaluation whether they will lead to an added value both for countries that have to compile their reports as well as for the WGI who evaluates them.
- 25. The WGI also concluded that in case the assessment of the reporting format should be pursued, it should be made by WGI supported also by its former members who gathered the experience in evaluating the national reports. The review should be carried out after the fifth meeting of the CoP, and should take into account the decisions of the Convention's Governing body.
- 26. The WGI agreed to report its conclusions related to future reporting to the Bureau of the CoP for decisions.

VI. Other business

- 27. At the invitation of its chairman, the WGI members informed each other in a tour de table about their availability for re-election to the WGI for the term 2009-2010. WGI members confirmed in principle their availability, which is subject to the approval of their respective authorities.
- 28. The WGI reiterated its concern that the representative of the Russian Federation had not participated in any of its meetings including the joint meetings with the Bureau. It invited therefore its Chairman to report at the fifth meeting of the CoP about the Group's dissatisfaction with regard to this situation and the absence of adequate support from the Russian Federation towards the Group's work.

VII. Closing of the meeting

- 29. Mr. Hem reviewed the outcome of the meeting and expressed his satisfaction on the progress made in the preparation of the fourth report on implementation. He thanked the members of the Group for their participation and contributions.
- 30. The Chairman thanked Ms. Nasslander and the Swedish authorities for hosting the meeting and for the excellent arrangements and closed the meeting.