UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents **WGI2/10 June 2002**

Working Group on Implementation

First meeting, 23-24 May 2002
Brussels (Belgium)

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

Introduction

1. The first meeting of the Working Group on Implementation, a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents was held in Brussels on 23-24 May 2002, at the invitation of the European Commission.

2. It was attended by Mr. Emil Malasek (Czech Republic), Mr. Lajos Katai-Urban (Hungary), Ms. Agata Puente (Spain), Mr. Ulf Bjurman (Sweden), Mr Bernard Gay (Switzerland), Mr. Jurgen Wettig (European Community) and Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak (UNECE, Secretary of the Convention). The members of the Working Group shortly introduced themselves.

3. Mr. Armin Heidler (Austria) excused his absence.

I. Opening of the meeting and short introduction

4. Mr. Ludwiczak opened the first meeting of the Working Group on Implementation welcoming all its members. He recalled Decision 2000/2 on the Implementation of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/2, annex III and appendix), taken by the CoP at its first meeting on 22-24 November 2000, and in particular the terms of reference of the Working Group. He was convinced that the work undertaken by the Group will efficiently result in compiling the first Report on the Implementation of the Convention and drawing up conclusions and recommendations to strengthen the implementation, to be submitted to the second meeting of the CoP.

II. Adoption of the agenda and constitution of the Working Group

5. The Working Group adopted the agenda for its first meeting as contained in WGI1/29 April 2002.

6. Mr. Ludwiczak, referring to a consultation within the Bureau of the CoP, and the Rules of Procedure for the meetings of the CoP (ECE/CP.TEIA/3) as well as Decision 2000/2, suggested to the Group to elect Mr. Jurgen Wettig and Mr. Emil Malasek as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. The Working Group unanimously elected them.

III. Progress in reporting on implementation

7. The Convention's secretariat informed the Working Group that the reporting formats were disseminated to all Parties and other UNECE member countries on 20 July 2001. The deadline for submission of individual country reports was set for 31 March 2002. A reminding letter was sent to all UNECE member countries on 31 January 2002 and another reminding message was addressed by the secretariat to those Parties, which have not met the deadline, on 25 April 2002.

8. At the time of the meeting of the Working Group, reports were received from fifteen Parties to the Convention: Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland. The Representative of Spain informed the Working Group that her country's report would be made available until the end of May.

9. The Working Group recommended that the European Community, being a Party to the Convention, should also submit a separate implementation report taking into account its field of competence. The representative of the European Community agreed to make this report available until the end of May.

10. The Working Group noted that even though the Parties were addressed by the secretariat three times, not all of them submitted their reports. Reports were not available from the following Parties: Albania, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Monaco.

11. In addition to reports received from the Parties, two other UNECE member countries, namely: Republic of Slovakia and Ukraine submitted their reports on a voluntary basis. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the two concerned Governments.

12. The members of the Working Group were generally positive when evaluating the quantitative results of reporting, taking into account the fact that this is the first round. Nevertheless, they expressed their dissatisfaction that seven Parties to the Convention, four of them being EU member States, did not report at all. The Working Group decided to address this issue in the Report and the Conclusions and Recommendations.

13. The Working Group also commended the secretariat for its pro-active role played in coordinating the reporting procedure.

IV. Preparation of the first Report on the Implementation of the Convention, and V. Preparation of the draft Conclusions and Recommendations to Strengthen the Implementation of the Convention

14. The secretariat informed the Working Group on the following approach, endorsed by the Bureau, to prepare and submit the above documents to the CoP:

(i) The Report would be compiled by the Working Group and submitted to the CoP as a background/reference document – it would also be made available on the Convention's Internet home page. Due to UNOG rules, this document would have to be finalized and submitted to the secretariat by 21 August at the latest in order to translate and further process it;

(ii) The draft Conclusions and Recommendations (first version) would also be prepared by the Working Group by 21 August. However, the Working Group would finalize this document, in cooperation with the Bureau, only after the subregional workshop on the implementation of the Convention (Yerevan, 19-21 September 2002), in order to take into account its outcome. The draft Conclusions and Recommendations would be submitted to the CoP as an annex to a draft decision on strengthening the implementation of the Convention. Thus, this document would be submitted for translation and processing, on an exceptional basis, after the deadline for submission of documents for the CoP.

15. The Working Group agreed with the above approach. In its discussion, the Working Group expressed the view that together with the Bureau, it should give special attention to the subregional workshop and its outcome.

16. The Working Group discussed and decided on the structure of the first Report on the Implementation of the Convention. It decided that the report would include an executive summary (if feasible – a final decision will be taken once the main body of the report is ready); an introduction; a quantitative analysis of reporting; a main section analyzing the responses by section; an assessment of the reporting procedure; and a reference to the conclusions and recommendations.

17. The Working Group analyzed and discussed the available country reports by section. This comparative analysis resulted in a rough text for the main section of the report and certain conclusions and recommendations.

18. The Working Group came to a conclusion that individual country reports may be useful for persons responsible for reporting on implementation in the second round of reporting as reference documents. To this end the Group recommended to the CoP to take a decision to make the country reports available on a password protected page within the Convention's Internet home page.

VI. Organization of further work, and
VII. Possible future meetings of the Working Group

19. Mr. Wettig agreed to draft a major part of the report and the conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the outcome of the discussions held at this meeting and disseminate the first draft to the members of the Group for their comments/suggestions by mid-June. The Group welcomed this offer and expressed its appreciation to Mr. Wettig. The secretariat agreed to draft the introduction to the report.

20. Depending on the nature and the number of comments received, the Chairman together with the Vice-Chairman would decide if an electronic consultation will be sufficient to finalize the two documents or whether a second meeting of the Working Group is necessary.

21. The Working Group also discussed its future role and tasks. It decided to recommend that the CoP gives the Working Group a mandate to review the reporting procedure and in particular the reporting format based on the experience gained during the first reporting round. A meeting of the Working Group was suggested to take place before the second reporting round is commenced.

22. The Working Group members were also in agreement that that the Group should be more active in monitoring the Convention's implementation in the future. To this end, more regular and frequent meetings of the Working Group were suggested.

VIII. Closing of the meeting

23. The Chairman reviewed the outcome of the two-day meeting concluding that the Working Group made considerable progress to achieve its immediate goal – the preparation of requested documents for the CoP. Mr. Wettig thanked all members of the Group for their active participation and closed the first meeting of the Working Group on Implementation.