

## **CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

## **CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

### **Joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents**

Fifth meeting  
Budapest, 26 October 2004

### **MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

The expert group held its fifth meeting on 26 October 2004 in Budapest at the Ministry for Environment and Water. The two Co-Chairpersons, Peter Kovacs (Hungary) and Martin Schiess (Switzerland) chaired the meeting.

#### **I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

Mr. Kovacs opened the meeting and briefed the participants about activities undertaken by his ministry that were of relevance to the expert group.

The expert group took note of the information by the secretariat on: (a) relevant decisions taken by the Parties to the Water Conventions at their third meeting (Madrid, November 2003); (b) existing draft decisions expected to be adopted by the third meeting of Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention (Budapest, 27-30 October 2004); and (c) the status of ratification of the two Conventions and related protocols.

#### **II. Election of officers**

The expert group, noting that Mr. Schiess would take up other functions and responsibilities in the Swiss environmental administration, expressed its gratitude for his able co-chairmanship, which was key to the many accomplishments and achievements of the expert group.

The Working Group elected Mr. Gerd Winkelmann-Oie (Germany) and Mr. Kovacs (Hungary) as its new Co-Chairpersons. They will take office after the end of the fifth meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by the Conventions' secretariats in consultation with the Co-Chairpersons.

### **III. Review of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Hamburg seminar**

Based on the draft reporting scheme, drawn up by Mr. Kovacs after the fourth meeting of the expert group, and comments received, the expert group finalized its work on this reporting scheme.

To facilitate the responses by EU and EFTA countries, Mr. Kovacs, Mr. Schiess and Mr Winkelmann-Oie agreed to fill in the reporting scheme with the Hungarian, Swiss and German responses, respectively, before the reporting scheme would be mailed to the other EU/EFTA countries. The responses for Germany, Hungary and Switzerland would be available by mid-January 2005, so that the secretariat – while setting 30 June 2005 as deadline for the responses - could mail out the request to the other countries, accompanied with the three examples, by end of January 2005.

Recalling the other deadlines and responsibilities set in the minutes of the fourth meeting (JEG7, paragraph 20), the expert group agreed to organize its work so that the draft report could be submitted in March 2006; thus it would be ready well in advance of the meetings of the governing bodies of both Conventions in late summer/autumn 2006.<sup>2</sup>

### **IV. Status of the inventory of existing safety guidelines and best practices for the prevention of accidental transboundary water pollution ([www.unece.org/env/teia/water/inventory.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/teia/water/inventory.htm)).**

The joint expert group noted that the inventory should be further developed and updated with additional information by countries and/or joint bodies and requested Peter Kovacs to inform the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention accordingly (see agenda item 13).

### **V. Safety guidelines and best practices related to off-site pipelines**

The joint expert took note of the discussion paper by the secretariat (JEG10), which included a brief outline of a possible workshop programme. Germany and the Netherlands offered to host two workshops: one in Berlin, most likely in June 2006, on safety of oil pipelines; and the other in the Netherlands in the first half of 2006 on the safety of gas pipelines.

The expert group agreed with the proposal, made by both countries, to establish a Steering Group, which would be responsible for the preparation of the workshops as well as the drawing up of draft safety guidelines and best practice. Details would be worked out at the first meeting of the Steering Group, scheduled for early 2005.

The expert group expressed its appreciation to both countries for their offer to host the workshops and cover travel expenses of eligible participants.

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<sup>2</sup> The Parties to the Water Convention will meet in Germany in the first week of October 2006. The Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention will meet in Italy in November 2006.

## **VI. Facilitating the exchange of information on the functioning of existing alarm and notification systems at national, regional and local levels**

The expert group took note of the information by the secretariat on the new reports developed under the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System, which will be considered by the Conference of the Parties and the effects of harmonization efforts undertaken by the UNECE, the UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit and the Civil Protection Unit of the European Commission to unify the assistance request report to be used by the three organizations.

The secretariat also informed the expert group that in cooperation with the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, a prototype of a simple web-based communication tool for the UNECE IAN System was developed and will be presented at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

## **VII. International response exercises**

The expert group took note of the oral report of the secretariat on lessons learned from the organizing international response exercises. The expert group noted with concern that the representatives of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – although unable to attend the meeting – did not inform the secretariat about the outcome of their consultations with their national authorities to host the next exercises (see the minutes of the fifth meeting, JEG7, para. 25).

The expert group took note of the information by Germany that a response exercise is being jointly prepared with the Polish authorities. It will take place in mid-2005 in the German part of the Oder River basin and it will be open to observers from the expert group and other invited participants.

## **VIII. Drawing up guidelines for establishing model cross-border contingency plans and disseminating them widely among UNECE member countries**

The expert group took note of the information by Hungary on the progress made in the drawing up of a joint contingency plan for the Samos River shared by Hungary and Romania as well as the finalization of work on a joint water-quality map and a draft joint development programme.

The expert group invited Hungary to prepare a brief note on lessons learned so that the Hungarian-Romanian experience could be shared with other countries and joint bodies.

## **IX. Work plan 2005-2006**

The expert group specified its activities on safety of pipelines/best practice as follows (see JEG2, paragraph 11 (c)): The expert group will prepare draft recommendations on pipeline safety and best practice for adoption at the 2006 meetings of the governing bodies of the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Water Convention. A Steering Group will base these guidelines on the outcome of two workshops on the safety of oil and gas pipelines, scheduled to take place in Germany in 2005 and in the Netherlands in 2006, as well as other inputs.

The expert group took note of the information by Germany that it is working together with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River on a draft guidance document on tailing dams. Further information would be provided at the next meeting of the expert group so that the expert group could further elaborate this guidance for other river basins and circumstances.

The expert group noted a strong need for information exchange with other groups under the Conventions and under other bilateral and multilateral agreements. Examples of the latter include the Black Sea Commission and joint bodies on transboundary inland waters established among some EECCA countries. It would therefore consider at its next meeting an item on information exchange and cooperation.

The expert group noted with concern that a number of EECCA countries, although participating in the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention, were not present at the expert group meeting or did not comply with their commitments made at earlier meetings. The expert group discussed various options for active participation and requested the Co-Chairmen and the secretariat to contact relevant countries and joint bodies with a request of nominating new members for the expert group.

#### **X. Other business**

The expert group took note of the information by Hungary on the status of a “Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the management of waste from the extractive industries”, and noted that that draft directive would possibly include cyanides in tailing dams. It would therefore be of relevance for the expert group’s work on tailing dams (see agenda item 10).

#### **XI. Date and venue of future meetings**

The expert group requested the secretariat to explore whether Russian interpretation would be available for its next meeting as this was important for the evaluation of the responses to the reporting scheme for the Hamburg Seminar. Possible dates include: first/second week of July 2005 or beginning of September 2005.

Another meeting of the expert group was tentatively scheduled for spring 2006. This would be devoted to the finalization of the report on the implementation of the Hamburg Seminar recommendations as well as the finalization of a draft document on pipeline safety and best practice.

#### **XII. Report on the expert group’s activities to the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention**

The expert group entrusted Mr. Kovacs to report on the outcome of the expert group meeting and the expert group’s activities at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention (Budapest, 27-30 October 2004).