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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY
EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

Consultation for points of contact for the purpose
of accident notification and mutual assistance
designated within the UNECE Industrial Accident
Notification System

Task force to review the communication procedures

Rome, 19-21 October 2005

**REPORT ON THE SECOND CONSULTATION AND
THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE**

Introduction

1. The second consultation for points of contact for the purpose of accident notification and mutual assistance designated within the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System was held from 19 to 20 October 2005. The first meeting of the task force to review the communication procedures was held on 21 October 2005. Both meetings took place in Rome and were organized by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Ministry for the Environment and Territory of Italy.
2. They were held under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, within the framework of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

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I. CONSULTATION

Objectives

3. The consultation provided a forum for:
 - (a) Reviewing the effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System on the basis of the results of the System's two regional tests, which were carried out before the consultation by the points of contact of Italy and the Russian Federation; and
 - (b) Sharing experience in the management of emergency situations, including industrial accidents.

Participation

4. Representatives of the points of contact and other experts from the following 25 countries participated in the second consultation: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.
5. The participation of representatives from countries with economies in transition, who were eligible for financial support, was supported directly by the Italian Ministry of Interior.

Opening

6. Mr. Michele Di Grezia, Director of the "Istituto Superiore Antincendi", opened the consultation and welcomed the participants to the Institute and to Rome and wished them a successful meeting.
7. Mr. Fabrizio Colcerasa, Director of the Central Directorate for Emergency and Technical Rescue, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for the Environment and Territory. He expressed his satisfaction that the two Ministries had organized the meeting jointly. He stressed that effective notification was a crucial element of preparedness and response to emergencies and, therefore, the points of contact should cooperate in order to improve the effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System. Mr. Colcerasa also stated the necessity to regularly test the System. To this end, he looked forward to discussing the results of two subregional tests, which were carried out before the consultation.
8. Mr. Ryszard Grosset, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties, informed the participants about the key decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting from 27 to 30 October 2004, in particular the decision amending the UNECE IAN System. Mr. Grosset also spoke about the assistance programme for East European, Caucasian and Central Asian (EECCA) countries and South-East European (SEE) countries to enhance their efforts to implement the Convention.

9. Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak welcomed everyone on behalf of the UNECE secretariat and expressed his appreciation to the Italian authorities for organizing the meeting and to the “Istituto Superiore Antincendi” for hosting it.

Election of chairman

10. Mr. Fabrizio Colcerasa (Italy) was elected chairman of the second consultation of the points of contact.

Programme

11. The points of contact agreed on the programme for their second consultation as contained in CP/TEIA/2005/8 with an additional presentation to be made by the representative of Georgia within the second session.

12. The consultation was divided into the following four sessions (the full programme containing the names of speakers and the titles of their presentations is given in annex I):

- (a) Session 1 – effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System;
- (b) Session 2 – notification and management of response to chemical accidents – early-warning systems, emergency preparedness, accident simulation, mitigation of consequences;
- (c) Session 3 – sharing of experience and lessons learnt from past accidents; and
- (d) Concluding session – identification of actions to be taken in order to improve the effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System.

Effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System

13. Mr. Ludwiczak gave an overview of the UNECE IAN System.

14. Mr. Giorgio Alocci, Deputy Director of the Central Directorate for Emergency and Technical Rescue of the Ministry of Interior of Italy and Mr. Mikhail Razanov, Chief of the Crisis Management Centre of the Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters of the Russian Federation, presented the results of two subregional tests carried out in preparation for the second consultation:

- (a) The test of 6 August 2005, in which the Italian point of contact addressed an “exercise” early warning report in English; and
- (b) The test of 27 July 2005, in which the Russian point of contact addressed an “exercise” early warning report in Russian.

15. The exercise notification was sent by Italy to 27 points of contact in countries of Central, South-Eastern and Western Europe, North America and at the European Commission.

16. The receipt of this notification was acknowledged, in accordance with the procedure under the UNECE IAN System, by just 16 of them. Four of these acknowledgements were only received after five hours.

17. The points of contact in Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States did not react at all.

18. The exercise notification in Russian was sent by the Russian Federation to points of contact in 9 EECCA countries. The points of contact in six of them reacted according to the UNECE IAN System's procedure, while three (Georgia, Kazakhstan and Republic of Moldova) acknowledged the receipt of the exercise notification only after a telephone reminder.

19. The points of contact compiled the results of the two tests and compared them with those of the test carried out by the Slovak point of contact in 2003 (see also annex II to this report), which allowed them to draw the following observations:

(a) The following 11 countries acknowledged receipt of the exercise notification during the recent tests, whereas they did not react correctly in 2003: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Finland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Ukraine and Uzbekistan;

(b) Eleven out of 36 points of contact did not react to the test in 2005 compared to 18 out of 37 countries in 2003 (31% in 2005 and 49% in 2003) – an overall improvement; and

(c) The following six countries did not react to either test: Bulgaria, Canada, France, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.

Capacity building

20. Within the second session, representatives of seven points of contact from Austria, Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Slovenia and Switzerland shared their experience and provided guidance on management of response in emergency situations, including industrial accidents, early warning systems and emergency preparedness. These presentations were highly valued, especially by the representatives of the points of contact from the EECCA countries, as contributions to the overall capacity-building effort of the Conference of the Parties.

21. Mr. Senzaconi shared experience gained in co-implementing an Italian sponsored project "Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents Management Model" (TEIAMM) in Romania. A similar project was launched by Italy in the Ferghana Valley in Central Asia. The participants agreed that the results of these projects could well contribute to the implementation of the Convention and the assistance programme launched by the Conference of the Parties.

Experience and lessons learnt from past accidents

22. Representatives of the Italian, Polish and Russian points of contact, within the third session, shared their experience in dealing with different accidents in the past: a harbour accident in Sardinia; an accident in the Gdansk Refinery; and large-scale oil spills in the Russian Federation.

Conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System

23. The representatives of points of contact drew the following conclusions:

(a) The results of the two subregional tests, carried out by Italy and the Russian Federation, although demonstrating an improvement in the overall effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System, were far from satisfactory;

(b) All points of contact from EECCA countries participating in the test reacted correctly, which was a considerable improvement from the previous test. On the other hand, concern was expressed that the points of contact in 11 other countries did not acknowledge the receipt of the exercise notification. Six of these points of contact also failed to respond in the previous test;

(c) The competent authorities of the Parties, whose points of contact did not respond properly within the test, should be notified by the secretariat and invited to comply with the obligations under the Convention and the procedures under the UNECE IAN System. They should, especially, ensure that their points of contact are operational 24 hours a day;

(d) Other member countries whose points of contact did not respond properly within the test should also be reminded by the secretariat that they must follow the procedures under the UNECE IAN System. They must also realize that the points of contact have to be operational at all times;

(e) Further testing of the UNECE IAN System at regular intervals – two rounds of testing per year – was considered important to improve and maintain its effectiveness. Each round of testing should consist of two subregional tests. The first test should be carried out using an exercise notification in English and the second one using an exercise notification in Russian;

(f) The secretariat was requested to prepare a schedule of the testing and to make it available on the Convention's website. It was also invited to initiate the rounds of testing by notifying the concerned points of contact, at the beginning of the half-year periods, in which the tests are to be performed;

(g) Each test should comprise the transmission of an exercise early warning report by means of fax and e-mail and, in the case of no reply, a follow-up telephone call. The contact details of points of contact are to be found on the Convention's website;

(h) All the points of contact were requested to verify their contact details on the Convention's website and to inform the secretariat about any modifications without delay;

(i) The results of future tests should be communicated to: (i) future consultations of the points of contact; (ii) the Working Group on Implementation; and (iii) the Conference of the Parties for further consideration; and

(j) The representatives of points of contact present at the second consultation requested its Chairman to inform the Working Group on Implementation and report on these conclusions to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting to take place in Rome on 15-17 November 2006.

Closing

24. Mr. Colcerasa, in closing the second consultation, expressed appreciation to the representatives of all points of contact for their valuable input to the overall success of the meeting. He especially thanked all the speakers for sharing their most interesting experience and the members of the Convention's secretariat for their assistance in preparing and conducting the consultation.

II. TASK FORCE MEETING

Objectives

25. The task force's objective was to examine and make a recommendation on which of the three systems identified earlier (Infra-web System – Netherlands; Natural and Environmental Disasters Information Exchange System – European Commission; or the simple communication system, a prototype of which was developed by the UNECE together with the Joint United Nations Environment Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNEP/OCHA) Environment Unit) would be most suitable for the UNECE IAN System.

Participation

26. The same representatives of points of contact from 24 UNECE member countries (with the exception of Germany) who participated in the second consultation also took part in the first meeting of the task force (see paragraphs 4 and 5).

27. Mr. Marco Carcassi, Professor at the University of Pisa, Italy, took part in the meeting as an expert providing an independent analysis of the three above-mentioned systems and their suitability within the UNECE IAN System.

Opening and election of the Chairman

28. Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak opened the meeting of the task force and recalled the mandate given to it by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting. He welcomed the representatives of the Italian Ministry of Environment who joined the points of contact for this meeting.

29. The points of contact elected Ms. Giuliana Gasparrini, Head of Division in the Department for Environmental Research and Development of the Ministry for the Environment and Territory, to chair the task force meeting. Upon her election, Ms. Gasparrini briefly described the cooperation between the competent authorities that she and Mr. Colcerasa represented. She then introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting (CP.TEIA/2005/8).

30. The meeting agreed to the proposed agenda. At the same time, the participants noted that Mr. Colcerasa would introduce the Natural and Environmental Disasters Information Exchange System on behalf of the European Commission's Civil Protection Unit.

Introduction and background

31. Mr. Ludwiczak introduced the issue of improving the communication procedures under the UNECE IAN System and recalled the earlier discussions in this connection. He gave an overview of the recommendations made earlier by the points of contact, the actions taken by the secretariat and in particular the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting.

Presentation of the three systems

32. Three systems, earlier identified as possibilities for improving communication between points of contact within the UNECE IAN System, were introduced to the participants of the task force by:

(a) Mr. Wilfried van Gogh (Netherlands), who presented the Infra-web Operational Incident Management and Communication System and the possibility of adapting it to the needs of the UNECE IAN System;

(b) Mr. Fabrizio Colcerasa (Italy), who presented a concept of the Natural and Environmental Disasters Information Exchange System, which was made available to the task force in writing by the European Commission; and

(c) Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski (UNECE secretariat), who presented a prototype of a simple web-based notification application developed jointly by UNECE and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit for use within the UNECE IAN System and in communications with the Joint Unit.

Independent analysis

33. The task force also heard a presentation by Mr. Carcassi, who carried out an independent analysis on which of the three systems would be most suitable for use within the UNECE IAN System.

34. The independent analysis was commissioned by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in order to facilitate the discussions and conclusions of the task force. When performing the analysis, Mr. Carcassi met with individuals responsible for either operating or developing the three systems: (i) Civil Protection Unit of the European Commission; (ii) Institute of Inland Water Management and Waste Water Treatment (RIZA) of the Netherlands; and (iii) UNECE, Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit and OCHA.

35. In his presentation, Mr. Carcassi compared the three web-based systems, pointed to their strengths and weaknesses and made the following conclusions:

(a) The Natural and Environmental Disasters Information Exchange System of the European Commission should not, at present, be considered as a realistic option for communications between the points of contact within the UNECE IAN System. This was because its scope of application was planned to be much wider than the competence of the points of contact and access to it was restricted to personnel authorized by member States;

(b) The Infra-web System, being a comprehensive incident management tool, surpassed the current requirements of the UNECE IAN System. It should be considered as an option for use under the UNECE IAN System in case Parties to the Convention decide to extend the tasks of the points of contact beyond notifying an accident and/or requesting assistance; and

(c) The prototype of a simple web-based notification application, developed especially to meet the requirements of both the UNECE IAN System and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, should be considered as the best choice to improve the communication procedures under the UNECE IAN System taking into account the current tasks of the points of contact.

36. The task force expressed its appreciation to Mr. Carcassi for his efforts to help its work and to the Italian authorities for commissioning this useful analysis.

Discussion

37. The task force, based on the three presentations and the independent analysis, held a comprehensive discussion on whether to improve the communication procedures within the UNECE IAN System and the different options for doing so.

38. Participants spoke in favour of replacing the current fax-based communication procedure with more up-to-date web-based technology, although different opinions were expressed regarding the pace at which this should happen. The majority view was in favour of rapid implementation following relevant decisions by the Conference of the Parties.

39. Many participants, in particular those working in Russian, welcomed the possibility of completing reports in one language and accessing them in the other (English – Russian) as an additional, essential advantage of improving the communication procedures.

40. A majority of the participants spoke in favour of further developing the prototype of the simple web-based notification application and applying it within the UNECE IAN System. Among the arguments were its simplicity of use and, therefore, the need for very little training of personnel, and the application's meeting all the current requirements of the points of contact under the System.

41. At the same time, many participants commended the Dutch Infra-web System as being a comprehensive tool for interactive use to manage incidents, which many disaster management units would like to work with. Some participants agreed that choosing the Infra-web System would be appropriate if the tasks of the points of contact were broader – an issue going beyond the mandate of the task force.

Recommendations

42. The task force, in accordance with its mandate, agreed to make the following recommendations to the Conference of the Parties:

(a) The UNECE IAN System's communication procedures should be enhanced by introducing web-based technology notifications, while keeping the present fax notifications as a back-up procedure;

(b) Taking into consideration the current requirements of the UNECE IAN System, the prototype of the simple web-based notification application, developed jointly by the UNECE

and the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, should be considered as the optimal solution and, therefore, chosen to improve the communication between points of contact;

(c) If the current notification tasks of the points of contact were to be extended by the Parties, e.g. in the direction of management of the response to industrial accidents, then the Infra-web System should be considered as a good solution and chosen for the future modified UNECE IAN System.

43. The task force invited Ms. Gasparini to present the above recommendations to the Bureau as requested by the Conference of the Parties at its third meeting in Budapest from 27 to 30 October 2004 (ECE/CP.TEIA/12, paragraph 58).

Closing

44. Ms. Gasparini thanked the four speakers for their presentations and all participants for their involvement in the discussions and in drawing up the recommendations.

45. Mr. Ludwiczak, speaking on behalf of all participants and the secretariat, expressed appreciation to both hosting authorities: the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Environment and Territory as well as the "Istituto Superiore Antincendi" for their hospitality and excellent arrangements made for both the consultation and the meeting of the task force.

Annex I**Programme of the second consultation 1/**

Session 1: Effectiveness of the UNECE IAN System	
1.	Introduction to the meeting – Overview of the UNECE IAN System <i>Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak, Secretary of the Conference of the Parties</i>
2.	Results of the test of the UNECE IAN System performed by Italy <i>Mr. Giorgio Alocci, Deputy Director of Central Directorate for Emergency and Technical Rescue, Ministry of the Interior, Italy</i>
3.	Results of the test of the UNECE IAN System performed by the Russian Federation <i>Mr. Mikhail Razanov, Chief of the Crisis Management Center, Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, Russian Federation</i>
Session 2: Notification and management of response to chemical accidents – early-warning systems, emergency preparedness, accident simulation, mitigation of consequences	
1.	Organization of the Austrian Federal Alarm Centre and the Federal Crisis and Disaster Protection Management <i>Mr. Johannes Stippel, Officer, Federal Alarm Centre and Alarm Precautions, Federal Ministry of Interior, Austria</i>
2.	Objectives and tasks of the Armenian Emergency Management Administration <i>Mr. Arman Avagyan, Advisor, Ministry of Territorial Administration, Armenia</i>
3.	Early warning procedures and response mechanisms in case of industrial accidents in Bulgaria <i>Ms. Conka Dryankova, Expert, Department of Operative Control and Management of Dangerous Substances, Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria</i>
4.	The function of the Czech National Operational Centre in case of emergencies <i>Ms. Irena Jansova, Officer of the Fire Service, Ministry of Interior, Czech Republic</i>
5.	Emergency response in Slovenia <i>Ms. Danica Babic, Operator, Notification Center, Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, Ministry of Defence, Slovenia</i>
6.	Actions of the International Atomic Energy Agency to improve the international communication during incidents and emergencies <i>Mr. Dominique Rauber, Head of International Affairs, National Emergency Operations Centre, Switzerland</i>
7.	Results of an Italian-sponsored project “Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents Management Model” carried out in Romania <i>Mr. Francisc Senzaconi, Deputy Head, Department for Prevention of Disasters, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Administration and Interior, Romania</i>
8.	Crisis Management during natural and man-made emergencies in Georgia <i>Mr. Pridon Sadunishvili, Chief of Service, Emergency Situation and Civil Safety Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Georgia</i>
Session 3 – Sharing of experience and lessons learnt from past accidents	
1.	Oil spills; response of the Russian System for Disaster Management (RSDM) and inter-agency cooperation in case of large-scale disasters <i>Mr. Mikhail Razanov, Chief of the Crisis Management Center, Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, Russian Federation</i>
2.	Response to an accident in the Gdansk Refinery <i>Mr. Ryszard Grosset, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties; Rector of the Main School of the Fire Services, Poland</i>
3.	Response to a harbour accident in Sardinia <i>Mr. Ennio Aquilino, Head of Division for Emergency Planning, Central Directorate for Emergency and Technical Rescue, Ministry of the Interior, Italy</i>
Concluding session	

Annex II**Comparison of the results of the two 2005 subregional tests
with the 2003 UNECE-wide test**

COUNTRY	RESPONDED CORRECTLY in 2005	RESPONDED CORRECTLY in 2003
ITALY	Carried out the test	YES
AUSTRIA	YES	YES
BELGIUM	NO	YES
BULGARIA	NO	NO
CANADA	NO	NO
CROATIA	YES	YES
CZECH REPUBLIC	YES	YES
DENMARK	NO	YES
ESTONIA	YES	YES
FINLAND	YES	NO
FRANCE	NO	NO
GERMANY	YES 2/	YES
HUNGARY	YES	YES
LATVIA	YES	YES
LITHUANIA	NO	YES
LUXEMBOURG	NO	YES
NETHERLANDS	YES	YES
NORWAY	YES 2/	YES
POLAND	YES 2/	NO
SLOVAKIA	NO	Carried out the test
SLOVENIA	YES	YES
SPAIN	YES	NO
SWEDEN	YES	YES
SWITZERLAND	YES	YES
TURKEY	NO	NO
UNITED KINGDOM	NO	NO
UNITED STATES	NO	NO
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	YES 2/	YES
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Carried out the test	NO
ARMENIA	YES	NO
AZERBAIJAN	YES	NO
BELARUS	YES	NO
GEORGIA	YES 3/	YES
KAZAKHSTAN	YES 3/	NO
KYRGYZSTAN	YES	NO
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	YES 3/	NO
UKRAINE	YES	NO
UZBEKISTAN	YES	NO

2/ Confirmed receipt after more than 5 hours.

3/ Confirmed receipt after a reminder phone call was made.