

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

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

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING <sup>1</sup>**

**Introduction**

1. The joint expert group held its sixth meeting on 16 December 2005 in Geneva. Mr. G. Winkelmann-Oei (Germany) and Mr. P. Kovacs (Hungary) co-chaired the meeting.
2. The meeting was also attended by: Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia), Mr. Rasim Sattar-Zade (Azerbaijan), Mr. Pavel Danihelka (Czech Republic), Mr. Guido Hingst (Germany), Ms. Judit Hrotko and Mr. Lajos.Katai-Urban (Hungary), Mr. Chris Dijkens, Mr. Wilfred van Gogh and Mr. Philip J. Huijser (Netherlands), Mr. Gavril Gilca (Republic of Moldova), Mr. Dan Stematiu (Romania), Mr. Micun Stanic (Serbia and Montenegro), Ms. Darina Kobzowa and Mr. Tomas Trcka (Slovakia), Ms. Kaja Sukova (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and Mr. Yuri Yuschenko (Ukraine). Mr. Rainer Enderlein (Secretary of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention), Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak (Secretary of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention), Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski and Ms. Virginia Fusé (UNECE secretariat) also took part in the meeting.

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

3. The joint expert group adopted the agenda for its sixth meeting as contained in document JEG11/16 November 2005.
4. Mr. Ludwiczak informed the joint expert group on the outcome of the High-level Commitment Meeting (Geneva, 14-15 December) organized within the framework of the internationally supported assistance programme for the EECCA and SEE countries to enhance their efforts to implement the Industrial Accidents Convention. Representatives of 17 East European, Caucasian and Central Asian and South-East European countries, by adopting a declaration, committed their governments to implement the Convention, which was an important step within the assistance programme. Representatives of Central and West European countries expressed their strong support for the programme and pledged further financial resources for its implementation.

**II. Hamburg seminar and responses to the questionnaire**

5. The Co-Chairpersons briefed the expert group about their interim evaluation of the nine replies received from EU countries and other countries with market economies to a

---

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

questionnaire on the implementation of the Hamburg seminar conclusions and recommendations and the further work to be carried out.

6. Mr. Kovacs agreed to draw up a draft report on the implementation of the Hamburg seminar conclusions and recommendations in advance of the seventh meeting of the joint expert group, tentatively scheduled for April 2006 (see below). The draft report will be based on countries' replies to the questionnaire and other available information. It will contain recommendations for further action.

7. The joint expert group raised concerns about the low rate of replies to the questionnaire and noted that the secretariat had made arrangements for a joint letter by the Chairpersons of the governing bodies of the Industrial Accidents and the Water Conventions setting 31 January 2006 as the deadline for submission of the missing replies.

8. The joint expert group noted that it would make final adjustments to the draft report at its seventh meeting before submitting it to the Bureaux of both governing bodies for consideration at their joint session in May 2006. The draft report would then be submitted to the governing bodies for discussion and subsequent adoption at their meetings in autumn 2006.

### **III. Safety guidelines/good practices for pipelines and workshop on the prevention of accidents of gas transmission pipelines**

9. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei briefed the joint expert group about the outcome of the workshop on the prevention of water pollution due to pipeline accidents (Berlin, 8-9 June 2005). The report of the workshop (CP.TEIA/2005/3 – MP.WAT/WG.1/2005/3) was available through the Conventions' websites.

10. Mr. Ludwiczak informed the joint expert group about the preparations for the workshop on the prevention of accidents of gas transmission pipelines to take place in The Hague, Netherlands, on 8-9 March 2006. The information notice (ECE/CP.TEIA/SEM.1/2006/1 – ECE/MP.WAT/SEM.7/2006/1) including a provisional programme for the workshop was available through the Conventions' websites.

11. The joint expert group was briefed about the contribution of the participants of both workshops to the process of drawing up the safety guidelines by the steering group. It was also informed about the future steps concerning the guidelines. The steering group would submit its final draft to the joint expert group at its next meeting for consideration and endorsement before the document is submitted to both governing bodies for adoption at their meeting in the autumn 2006.

### **IV. Safety guidelines for tailing dams**

12. The joint expert group took note with appreciation of the keynote lectures by Mr. Hingst (IABG, Germany) on "Recommendations for the safety of tailing dams and checklists with safety measures to prevent and mitigate adverse impact on the environment" and by Mr. Stematiu (Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest, Romania) on "Safety guidelines for tailing dams, prepared under the auspices of the Tisza Task Force on Risk Reduction of Mining Accidents". Mr. Winkelmann-Oei introduced draft recommendations and checklists on tailing dam safety, which were currently under consideration by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.

13. The joint expert group pointed to some additional items that could be included in the above draft. One particular issue was the potential impact of floods on tailing dam safety.

14. The joint expert group agreed to seek additional input from organizations dealing with tailing dam safety such as: UNEP or the Commission on Large Dams. It also agreed to decide on how to further develop the guidelines at its next meeting. The group noted with appreciation the offer of Germany and Romania to compile a preliminary version of the guidelines by February/March 2006.

## **V. International response exercises**

15. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei provided information on the outcome of a bilateral German-Polish exercise, conducted in June 2004 in the Oder river basin.

16. The joint expert group recommended that response exercises, especially those in a transboundary context, should be further organized.

17. Mr. Gilca and Mr. Yuschenko informed the joint expert group about their preliminary investigation of the possibility to organize a joint response exercise between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as discussed by the group at its previous meetings. The concern over the financial resources that would be needed to organize such an event was mentioned.

18. Mr. Ludwiczak suggested that such a joint exercise could become an element of the implementation phase of the assistance programme under the Industrial Accidents Convention after its identification by the fact-finding teams, which will visit these countries within the framework of the programme.

19. Mr. Kovacs and Mr. Katai-Urban provided information about preparations for a bilateral response exercise on the Hungarian-Romanian transboundary waters, including an evaluation workshop. The modalities for participation of its members would be provided shortly.

## **VI. Alarm and notification systems**

20. Mr. Enderlin informed the joint expert group about the outcome of, and the follow up to, the recent workshop on joint monitoring and assessment of shared water basins, including early warning and alarm systems (Tbilisi, 31 October - 2 November 2005). The workshop was conducted under the Water Convention's project "Capacity-for-Water Cooperation (CWC project)".

21. The joint expert group noted the potential of the CWC project to disseminate experience of the joint expert group, including early warning. Further information on a future workshop related to activities of joint bodies, which will include good practice of joint bodies on early warning for hydrological extreme events and accidental water pollution, will be provided to the group at its next meeting.

22. Mr. Stanic proposed that the joint expert group could play a role in the Water Convention's activities on sustainable flood prevention, particularly related to flood warning systems.

23. Mr. Wilfred van Gogh proposed a visit to an early-warning station in the Netherlands on the occasion of the pipeline workshop (see paragraph 10).

24. In, addition, Mr. Ludwiczak suggested that one of the future consultations of the points of contact designated for notification and mutual assistance under the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification System could a forum for an exchange of views and experience between accident notification systems and early warning systems.

## **VII. Work plan**

26. The joint expert group noted that its work plan (ECE/CP.TEIA/2, annex VI, decision 2000/5) contained items that have not yet been taken up (e.g. potential accidents related to the navigation of ships) or that have been taken up recently (e.g. safety guidelines on tailing dams). The group was of the opinion that these items would have to be concluded before additional ones are taken up.

27. The secretariats of both Conventions referred to their priority activities leading to the forthcoming meetings of the governing bodies. To this end, they also urged the joint expert group to develop a draft of its work plan to be considered by the two governing bodies.

28. The joint expert group agreed to consider possible new topics for its draft work plan at its next meeting.

## **VIII. Other business**

29. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei provided participants with initial information on a final workshop within the “Kura project on transboundary risk management”, planned by Germany together with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. It will take place on 26-27 September 2006 in Georgia. He also informed on progress in other multilateral activities under a German programme of assistance for EECCA and SEE countries in the field of hazard prevention, including international warning and alert systems, especially at the Kura, Neman and Dnestr Rivers as well as training programmes in Ukraine. More details are available at the following addresses:

- (a) <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/ius-e/index.htm>;
- (b) [http://www.kura.iabg.de/index\\_engl.htm](http://www.kura.iabg.de/index_engl.htm) (Transboundary risk management at the Kura River Catchment);
- (c) [http://www.neman.iabg.de/index\\_engl.htm](http://www.neman.iabg.de/index_engl.htm) (International Warning and Alert System for the River Neman);
- (d) [http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/anlagen/EASE/index\\_gb.htm](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/anlagen/EASE/index_gb.htm) (Integration of Monitoring Stations in International Warning and Alarm Systems; and
- (e) <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/anlagen/Checklistenmethode/index.html> (Training Programme for Safety Measures at Industries Hazardous to Waters).

## **IX. Seventh meeting of the joint expert group**

30. The joint expert group agreed to hold its seventh meeting on 10-11 April 2006. It requested the Co-Chairmen together with the two secretariats to decide on the venue, Budapest, Chisinau and Geneva were the three possibilities.