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



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6 March 2007

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

ENGLISH
ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN ONLY

Workshop on Transboundary Accidental Water Pollution,
Liability and Compensation: Challenges and
Opportunities
Budapest (Hungary), 21–22 May 2007

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Introduction

1. The Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents adopted the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters at their second joint special session, held in Kiev on 21 May 2003.
2. The Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention agreed at their respective last meetings (Rome, 15–17 November 2006, and Bonn, 20–22 November 2006) to undertake activities to explore the current ratification status of the Protocol.
3. The Bureaus of both Conventions agreed to organize a workshop on “Transboundary Accidental Water Pollution, Liability and Compensation: Challenges and Opportunities”.

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4. The conclusions of the workshop will be presented to the sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” to be held in Belgrade in October 2007.

II. Objectives

5. The workshop will bring together lawyers, economists, managers and technical experts. It will provide a platform for sharing information and experience on liability and compensation for damage resulting from the effects of industrial accident on transboundary waters. Experts will also discuss developments, problems and concerns regarding the ratification of the Protocol. The workshop will thus be an opportunity to investigate challenges encountered, share lessons learned and identify possible solutions.

III. Dates and venue

6. The workshop will take place on Monday and Tuesday, 21 and 22 May 2007 at the invitation of the Ministry of Environment and Water of Hungary.

7. It will be held at the Pala-ház in Budapest at the following address:

Pala-ház
H-1011 Budapest
Fő utca 14-18
Hungary

IV. Organization of work

8. The workshop will consist of three sessions.
9. The introductory session will set the scene for the discussion, with selected presentations on basic issues such as:
 - (a) Lessons learned from past industrial accidents with transboundary effects and their legal consequences;
 - (b) Overview of different liability and compensation regimes and existing instruments;
 - (c) Existing European Union regulations and future perspectives on liability and compensation;
 - (d) The objective and essence of the Protocol on Civil Liability and the added value compared to other regimes.
10. During the second session, participants will share their experience with the Protocol, in particular developments, problems and concerns regarding the ratification of this instrument.

11. The third session will be devoted to specific issues such as the assessment of damage and the role of the insurance sector.

12. All participants will be expected to contribute to the discussion. To facilitate the preparatory work, experts' attention is drawn to the following topics for discussion:

- (a) The legal situation in UNECE member countries/regional economic integration organizations with regard to addressing damage to transboundary waters from the effects of industrial accidents, taking into account cases where pollution is generated inside and outside a country; aspects related to liability and compensation (e.g. type of damage covered, enforcement and recognition of judgements, nature of liability, time and financial limits of liability, existing bilateral and multilateral agreements and existing gaps);
- (b) The status of the ratification of the Protocol in UNECE member countries/regional economic integration organizations;
- (c) Difficulties, concerns and obstacles encountered by UNECE member countries/regional economic integration organizations, including legal, technical, economic and social aspects, as well as practical difficulties that hamper the capacity to ratify the Protocol;
- (d) Conclusions and proposals for further actions.

13. To facilitate the workshop preparations, experts are kindly invited to send their written input on the above-mentioned issues to the Conventions' secretariats, possibly by 30 March 2007.

14. A detailed provisional programme for the workshop will be issued in April 2007.

V. Working languages

15. The workshop will be conducted in English and Russian.

VI. Participation

16. The workshop is open to experts from all UNECE member countries coming from relevant authorities, the private sector or non-governmental organizations.

17. Experts from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be addressed to the secretariat as soon as possible but not later than 30 March 2007. The financial request form is available at www.unece.org/env/civil-liability/welcome.html.

VII. Registration of participants

18. Each participant should complete a registration form (available at www.unece.org/env/civil-liability/welcome.html) and return it to the organizers and the secretariat at the address indicated on the registration form as soon as possible but not later than 16 April 2007.

VIII. Arrival of participants, transport and hotel accommodation

19. The workshop will start at 9 a.m. on 21 May 2007; therefore participants are advised to arrive in Budapest on Sunday, 20 May. For information on the venue and accommodation options please consult the UNECE website at www.unece.org/env/civil-liability/welcome.html. Participants are expected to make their hotel reservation and arrange their own transfer from the airport to the hotel upon arrival in Budapest, and from the hotel to the airport upon departure. Further information on transport is available on the above-mentioned website.

IX. Visas

20. Participants requiring an entry visa should inform the secretariat as soon as possible. They should contact their local Hungarian diplomatic representation to apply for the visa.
