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Training session on Identification of Hazardous
Activities

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REPORT OF THE TRAINING SESSION

Introduction

1. A hands-on training session on identification of hazardous activities was held on 21 and 22 October 2008 in Minsk. It was organized within the framework of the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) pursuant to a decision made by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting (Rome, 15–17 November 2006; ECE/CP.TEIA/15/Add.1, decision 2006/1). This activity was part of the Convention's workplan (ECE/CP.TEIA/15/Add.1, decision 2006/4 and appendix II).

2. The Ministry for Emergency Situations of Belarus organized the training session. Financial support was provided by the Parties to the Convention who had donated funds for Assistance Programme activities.

I. OBJECTIVES

3. The key objectives of the training session were: (a) to build up the knowledge base of experts from EECCA and SEE countries with respect to identifying hazardous activities, i.e. industrial facilities potentially capable of causing transboundary effects in the event of an accident, and (b) to facilitate an exchange of good practices regarding the collection, processing and maintenance of information on hazardous activities.

4. During the training session, participants had the opportunity:

(a) To discuss integrated institutional approaches for collecting, processing and maintaining information on hazardous activities;

(b) To improve their understanding of how to apply the Convention's annex I and the guidelines on location criteria in identifying hazardous activities;

(c) To enhance analysis of data on hazardous activities, including assessment of possible risks, including examination of case studies.

II. PARTICIPATION

5. The workshop was attended by representatives of the following authorities or institutions from EECCA and SEE countries: Armenia – the Ministry of Nature Protection, the State Technical Inspection of Armenia and the Armenian Rescue Service; Azerbaijan – the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources; Belarus – the Ministry of Emergency Situations; Croatia – the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction; Georgia – Georgian Environmental Inspectorate of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources; Kazakhstan – Ministry of Emergency Situations; Republic of Moldova – the State Ecological Inspection, the State Hydrometeorological Service and the Standardization and Metrology Service; Romania – the Ministry of Administration and the Interior; Serbia – the Ministry of Environmental and Spatial Planning; and Ukraine – the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Ukraine of Emergencies and Affairs of Population Protection from the Consequences of Chernobyl Catastrophe. A representative from the Agency of Investigation of Industrial Risks, Russian Federation, participated as an observer.

6. The workshop was supported by experts from Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Switzerland, and by the Convention secretariat.

III. OPENING, WELCOME ADDRESS, SETTING THE SCENE

7. Mr. Viktor Borovsky, Head of the Department for Supervision of Industrial and Nuclear Safety, Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus, chaired the meeting. After opening the meeting, he introduced Mr. Valentin Karpitsky, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus, and Mr. Bernard Gay (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties.

8. Mr. Karpitsky welcomed the participants and experts and expressed his satisfaction that Belarus could organize the event. He noted that Belarus had ratified the Convention and that as a Party it paid much attention to industrial safety. For Belarusian authorities, the issue of proper identification of industrial facilities that could harm the environment and people's health in the event of accident was very important. It was thus of particular interest to the Belarusian experts to learn about the good practices of other countries with respect to identifying hazardous industrial facilities, especially those capable of causing transboundary effects.

9. The Vice-Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties, speaking on behalf of Ms. Giuliana Gasparrini, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties, thanked the Belarusian organizers for the warm welcome. He reiterated the Conference of the Parties' support for EECCA and SEE countries' efforts to further strengthen implementation of the Convention. This session – organized as a training for trainers and aimed at initiating and/or strengthening a process through which hazardous activities could be continuously identified through better collection, processing and maintenance of data – was a next step in this regard. An important objective of this identification would be for Parties to notify their neighbours of potential sources of transboundary effects. As different legal and institutional frameworks would require different identification methods, he invited participants to retain what was most important for them. Actions taken with regard to identification should be integrated into the national action plans initiated at the first capacity-building activity (Kyiv, December 2007).

IV. PROGRAMME

Part I: Good practices for collecting, maintaining and updating information on hazardous activities

10. The training session began with a segment focused on the exchange of good practices for collecting, processing, maintaining and updating information on hazardous activities. It focused on how different countries were collecting, processing and maintaining information on hazardous activities and what were the real challenges involved. Experts from Bulgaria and the Netherlands presented their countries' approaches. The group discussions that followed indicated that in general, participating countries had established identification systems.

11. Many countries had adopted systems for local authorities to collect data on hazards. This was due to the fact that operators of hazardous installations were often legally obliged to periodically provide the local authorities with information, in some cases through submitting safety reports.

12. Analysis of data was assigned to particular authorities, who in turn, in some cases were supported by scientific institutes. Regarding the maintenance of data, some participating countries reported having created databases with hazardous facilities.

13. At first glance, the established systems appeared to be in place. In several countries, however, there were still issues to address, such as: the reliability of collected data, the exchange

of data between authorities and access to the information as contained in the databases. Therefore these cases should receive more attention.

Part II: Hands-on segment on processing and analyzing data on industrial facilities – application of annex I

14. In the session's second part, participants focused on analysis of the available data and on learning to assess whether a particular hazardous activity could cause transboundary effects and should be identified as such. Participants reviewed annex I to the Convention and its application, and then discussed location criteria, risk assessment and possible accident scenarios for industrial facilities that handle substances that are dangerous when released into water or could cause an explosion or the escape of toxic fumes when released into air.

15. Bulgarian and Dutch experts gave a review of annex I and its application and explained (a) the categories of substance and named substance in annex I, and (b) what sources can be used for proper classification of substances into categories. Breakout groups focused mainly on difficulties with classifying the substances and the issue of hazardous facilities that handle a number of different hazardous substances.

16. Countries had been invited to provide information about the relevant chemical sites in their countries well in advance of the training session. This information was a useful input to the group discussions.

17. The location criteria, risk assessment and use of worst-case scenarios were discussed separately for water and air paths. Good practice and how to apply the location criteria in view of possible worst-case scenarios were covered in presentations for water paths by Swiss and Italian experts and air paths by a Dutch expert. The group work showed that in some countries, application of location criteria, especially for water paths, was a challenge. Some participants found it difficult to think of worst-case scenarios. There was also a great interest in methods for calculating effects due to the release of hazardous liquids and gases. Selected sources (e. g. the "Yellow Book") were made available to the participants.

18. Participants also had the possibility to learn about using results of analysis for purposes other than identification whether or not a particular facility was capable of causing transboundary effects. The session ended with the presentation by a Slovak expert demonstrating good practices with data on hazardous activities, e.g. informing the public.

Part III: Wrap-up

19. Before closing the session, participants were able to provide their feedback and report on their countries' future progress vis-à-vis identification of hazardous activities. They were invited to communicate the possible needs that came up in the discussions on annex I, location criteria or scenarios, to consider in future training activities.

V. CONCLUSIONS

20. Participants agreed that the training session had been useful, as it provided an opportunity to examine work carried out so far with respect to identification of hazardous activities, to discuss it with the trainers and to recognize some shortcomings as well as tools and methods that could be improved. These included reliability of data, access to databases, proper use of annex I, understanding and use of location criteria, and calculation of effects.

21. Participants emerged with a better understanding of the use of annex I and location criteria. Discussions on the classification of chemicals and on interpretation of the location criteria had been especially valuable, and had allowed participants to discover certain inconsistencies that could be addressed in the near future.

22. For many, the application of worst-case scenarios for the analysis on identification of hazardous activities was new, and had made them realize how helpful this tool could be.

23. For the future, participants agreed that:

(a) The list of hazardous activities in their respective countries should be reviewed based on the knowledge gained in the training session and through improved cooperation with other authorities;

(b) The knowledge gained should be shared with other experts, both at the national and local levels, and to this end, national training sessions should be organized;

(c) In those countries that have not yet done so, classification criteria for hazardous substances should be reviewed, so as to be made better in line with annex I;

(d) Steps should be taken to improve the collection and exchange of information within their countries, if the quality of data had not been sufficient to carry out a thorough analysis.

24. Participants also shared their countries' further needs, which they recognized during the discussions and analysis, including:

(a) Access to information about the classification of chemicals should be improved, and the language issue should be considered;

(b) A need for a guidebook on identification of hazardous activities should be considered; this could be a helpful tool, especially if it focused on providing access to relevant chemical databases and information about defining (worst-case) scenarios;

(c) Assistance in organizing national training sessions, especially through providing experts' support, would be helpful;

(d) Activities in the area of risk assessment – organized first as training for trainers, during which risk assessment methodologies, application and analysis of possible scenarios could be discussed – would help to establish a more firm knowledge in that area.

25. Participants expressed appreciation to the Belarusian authorities and to the secretariat for the organization of the training session. They also highly valued the work of the seven experts from Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Switzerland, and thanked them for their efforts.

VI. CLOSING OF THE TRAINING SESSION

26. The representative of the UNECE secretariat expressed his satisfaction that the two days had been spent very actively, and encouraged the participants to maintain the momentum and continue the work. He invited participants to reflect on the ways forward and needs identified in the training's discussions in the national action plans, and to ensure that the plans contained the most up-to-date information and served as a good basis for planning of future actions. He thanked the participants and the host country for their efforts and the experts for their contributions.

27. Reiterating the importance of the work, the Vice-Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties invited participants to continue improving the identification of hazardous activities. He thanked everyone for their active participation, and noted with appreciation the work of the organizing team and the secretariat.

28. The Chairperson thanked the participants for their contributions, and closed the session.

[ENGLISH ONLY]

Annex

TRAINING SESSION PROGRAMME

<p>Part I: Good practices for collecting, maintaining and updating information on hazardous activities:</p> <p>(a) The Bulgarian approach – Mr. Nikolay Savov (Bulgaria)</p> <p>(b) The Dutch approach – Mr. Henk van der Veen (Netherlands)</p>
<i>Group work</i>
<p>Part II: Hands-on segment on processing and analyzing data on industrial facilities – application of annex I:</p> <p>(a) Insight into Annex I – Mr. Nikolay Savov (Bulgaria)</p> <p>Insight into categories of Annex I – Mr. Domien Claessens (Netherlands)</p>
<i>Group work</i>
<p>Continuation of part II:</p> <p>(b) Possible scenarios and risk assessment for activities involving substance that may be released into water paths in case of accidents – Mr. Neil Manning (Italy)</p> <p>(c) Location criteria for activities involving substances that may be released into water paths in case of accident – Mr. Bernard Gay (Switzerland)</p>
<i>Group work</i>
<p>Continuation of part II:</p> <p>(d) Possible scenarios, risk assessment and location criteria for activities involving substances that may cause fire, explosion and be released into the air in case of accidents – Mr. Bert Wolting (Netherlands)</p>
<i>Group work</i>
<p>Continuation of part II:</p> <p>(e) Good practice on using the processed data on hazardous activities – Mr. Tomas Trcka (Slovakia)</p>
<p>Part III: Wrap-up:</p> <p>Short presentations by representatives of EECCA and SEE countries participating in the training session on lessons learned from the training and ways forward to further improve the process of identification of hazardous activities – input into the national action plans and their future execution</p>
Composition of groups

Participating countries	Experts
Armenia – Ukraine	Mr. B. Gay, Mr. B. Wolting
Azerbaijan – Belarus – Romania	Mr. N. Manning, Mr. T. Trcka
Croatia – Georgia – Serbia	Mr. N. Savov, Mr. D. Claessens
Kazakhstan – Republic of Moldova – Russian Federation (observer)	Mr. H. van der Veen, Mr. L. Wyrowski
