

Bureau of the Conference of the Parties

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING^{1/}

Introduction

1. The sixth meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) was held on 10-11 March 2005 in Warsaw.
2. Mr. Ryszard Grosset (Poland), Chairperson of the CoP, Mr. Lajos Katai-Urban (Hungary), Mr. Cristiano Piacente (Italy), Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia), Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany), Ms. Jasmina Karba (Slovenia) and Mr. Sergey Mokrousov (Russian Federation) and Mr. Sergiusz Ludwiczak (Secretary of the CoP) attended the meeting. Mr. Tobias Biermann (European Commission) did not attend.
3. In addition, Mr. Kees Van Kuijen (Netherlands) and Mr. Bernard Gay (Switzerland) attended the meeting on the invitation of the Chairperson.

I. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

4. Mr. Grosset opened the sixth meeting of the Bureau and welcomed the members of the Bureau and the invited participants to Warsaw and the Main School of the Fire Service. Mr. Grosset informed the Bureau that on 1 February 2005 he became the Rector of the School and therefore, left his previous position of Deputy Commander of the State Fire Services.
5. The Bureau adopted the agenda for its sixth meeting (COPB11/18 January 2005) and welcomed the invitation of Mr. Grosset to visit some of the school's laboratories and in particular its emergency management simulation unit.

II. Outcome of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties – review of the key decisions

6. The Bureau considered and planned its concrete actions in view of the decisions taken by the CoP, and in particular:
 - (a) **Adoption of the internationally supported assistance programme for the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian and the South-East European countries to enhance their efforts in implementing the Convention**
8. Mr. Ludwiczak introduced a proposal of the secretariat to organize the high-level meeting on 15 December 2005 in Geneva back-to-back with the second regional implementation forum on

^{1/} Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties.

the CSD-14 and CSD-15 clusters (scheduled for 16 December 2005). He also suggested a provisional programme for the high-level meeting (CRP.1/4 March 2005).

9. The Bureau accepted the above date and venue for the high-level commitment meeting and considered that the time until December would be needed to properly prepare it. The Bureau was of the opinion that the meeting should gather high-level representatives of all UNECE member countries. The secretariat was, therefore, requested to send out invitations to the meeting to Ministers of the Environment and Interior/Emergency Situations of all UNECE member countries.

10. The Bureau welcomed the first proposal of the meeting's programme and suggested to further target it towards the main goals of the meeting and the assistance programme. Its final draft would be agreed at a joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation in preparation of the high-level meeting to take place in Warsaw on 14 September 2005 (back-to-back to the training session on drawing up national implementation reports (12-13 September, see item IV). The Bureau suggested inviting representatives of international organizations, which are potentially interested in supporting the implementation of the assistance programme, such as UNITAR, UNEP, OSCE or regional environmental centres, to its September meeting.

11. The Bureau agreed that the first draft of the declaration, to be adopted by the heads of delegation of the EECCA and SEE countries, would be prepared by the Secretary and reviewed by the Chairperson and the Chairman of the Working Group on Implementation. The draft declaration would then be sent to the countries for consultation and finalized at the above-mentioned joint meeting.

12. The Bureau also decided that fact-finding teams would visit EECCA and SEE countries only after they have expressed their commitment to implementing the Convention at the high-level meeting in December 2005. The secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, will coordinate these missions and determine the composition of the fact-finding teams.

13. The Bureau also decided that each of the teams would file a report on its findings of whether the visited country has implemented the basic tasks under the Convention and what are its specific needs for assistance. The verification process should be based on a standard questionnaire to be used by each of the teams.

14. To this end a small drafting group was established. Ms Gurguliani, Mr. Winkelmann and Mr. Gay (would also ask Mr. Savov – member of the Working Group on Implementation) agreed to prepare a draft of such a questionnaire for further consideration at the joint Bureau/Working Group on Implementation meeting on 14 September 2005.

15. The Secretary informed the Bureau that all administrative actions in order to create a new extra-budgetary post within the Convention's secretariat were completed. He presented a job description and a draft vacancy notice (CRP.2/4 March 2005), which would be posted on the Convention's web site on 15 March 2005 with a deadline for applications of 15 April 2005. He expressed hope that the post would be filled starting 15 May 2005. A Divisional panel would review applications received from candidates.

16. The Bureau welcomed the above procedure.

17. The Secretary also informed the Bureau that the financial resources that were committed by some of the UNECE member countries towards the implementation of the assistance programme allowed to launch it but were not sufficient to cover the costs of all the activities foreseen in 2006 and that additional resources would have to be made available.

18. To this end:

(a) Ms. Karba confirmed the intention of the Slovenian Government to support the programme financially;

(b) Mr. Grosset informed the Bureau that the Polish Government is currently exploring such a possibility; and

(c) Mr. Winkelmann- Oei stated that it would be difficult for the German Government to make a direct financial contribution to the assistance programme through the trust fund.

(b) Review of annex I to the Convention and the establishment of the Working Group on the Development of the Convention

19. The Bureau members agreed that the Working Group on the Development of the Convention should, as a priority, carry out a review of the categories of substances and preparations and named substances and their quantities contained in annex I to the Convention. When reviewing annex I, the Group should keep in mind making it as compatible as possible with annex I to the EU “Seveso II” Directive.

20. Mr. Grosset informed the Bureau that he received a letter from Mr. Olivier Kervella, Chief of the Dangerous Goods and Special Cargoes Section of the UNECE’s Transport Division, drawing ECOSOC resolution 2003/64 of 25 July 2003 on the work of the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG) and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and labeling of Chemicals (GHS) to the attention of the Bureau of the CoP. In view of the letter, the Bureau recommended to the Working Group to take into account the harmonized classification criteria of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) when planning its work to review annex I to the Convention.

21. In accordance with CoP decision 2004/4 (para 2), the Bureau appointed Mr. Tobias Biermann (European Commission) as the Chairman of the Working Group. It also decided that the Chairperson, together with the Secretary, would address an information letter to all Parties after a concrete meeting date in May was agreed upon with the newly appointed Chairman.

III. UNECE Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System

(a) Visit to the emergency management simulation unit

22. The Bureau members, on the invitation of the Main School of the Fire Services, visited a number of laboratories and in particular its emergency management simulation unit – one of the most sophisticated of its kind in Europe. A simplified training module was presented to the Bureau members.

23. Mr. Grosset informed the Bureau that the simulation unit would be available for future simulation training of points of contact within the framework of the UNECE IAN System under the Convention.

24. The Bureau welcomed this offer and invited the points of contact to further consider this invitation at their second consultation (see item III (b)) on the basis of the information, which would be provided by the Polish point of contact.

(b) Second consultation and a training session for points of contact for the purpose of accident notification and mutual assistance

25. Mr. Piacente reiterated the invitation of the Government of Italy to host the second consultation of the points of contact in the second half of 2005. The consultation would probably be held in the week of 11 October 2005. He also informed that the Italian point of contact would perform a test of the UNECE IAN System prior to the consultation.

26. Mr. Mokrousov reiterated the offer of the Russian Federation to perform a similar test.

27. The Bureau welcomed the invitation and the above offers and decided that:

(a) Two subregional tests of the System would be carried out prior to the second consultation, preferably during the summer months of 2005, one performed by the Italian point of contact and addressed in English to points of contact in Central and Western European countries and the second one performed by the Russian Federation's point of contact and addressed in Russian to the points of contact in the East European, Caucasian and Central Asian and South-East European countries; and

(b) The results of the two tests would be considered by the points of contact at their second consultation in Italy in October 2005.

28. The Bureau invited the Italian point of contact to define the concrete date and venue for the second consultation in cooperation with the Secretary.

(c) Task force to review the communication procedures

29. The Bureau, following a decision of the CoP to establish a task force to review the communication procedures within the UNECE IAN System, recommended that its first meeting would take place in conjunction with the second consultation of the points of contact in October 2005. Therefore, it requested the Secretary to make appropriate preparations in cooperation with the Italian hosts.

30. The Bureau, in principle, supported the enhancement of the communication procedures. To this end, it recommended that the task force should examine which of the three identified systems (Infra-web System – Netherlands; Natural and Environmental Disasters Information Exchange System – European Commission; or the simple communication system developed by the UNECE jointly with the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit) would be most suitable for the UNECE IAN System. The task force should make its recommendations available to the Bureau, which would prepare a relevant draft decision for consideration by the CoP at its fourth meeting.

IV. Training session on drawing up national implementation reports

31. Mr. Gay informed the Bureau that following a decision of the CoP, the intention of the Working Group on Implementation was to organize a hands-on training session for persons charged with the responsibility of drawing up national implementation reports. Participants of the training session would be asked to draw up a report. They would be assisted and guided by the members of the Working Group. Mr. Gay also expressed his opinion that the training session would take place in the second half of 2005, within the third round of reporting on the implementation of the Convention.

32. Mr. Grosset expressed the willingness of the Main School of the Fire Services to host this training session at its headquarters in Warsaw on 12-13 September 2005.

33. The Bureau welcomed the offer and the Working Group's approach and decided to schedule the training session as proposed above (back-to-back with the joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation in preparation for the high-level commitment meeting (see item II (a)).

V. Workshop on the prevention of water pollution due to pipeline accidents

34. The secretariats of both the Industrial Accidents and the Water Conventions have addressed all UNECE member countries with an information letter together with an information notice on the workshop (CP.TEIA/2005/1).

35. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei informed the Bureau about the preparations for the workshop, which would take place on 8-9 June 2005 in Berlin. He mentioned that a steering group, established to assist the joint expert group on water and industrial accidents to draw up the guidelines/good practice for pipeline safety and to prepare the above workshop, would meet on 18 March 2005 in Berlin at its first meeting.

36. The Bureau welcomed this information and agreed to promote the workshop in order to encourage the participation of experts from UNECE member countries.

VI. Transboundary response exercise organized by Germany together with Poland

37. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei informed the Bureau that a transboundary response exercise would be organized by Germany together with Poland on 11 June 2005. The event would not be organized under the auspices of the CoP and therefore an observer programme open to all UNECE member countries is not foreseen. However, participants of the workshop on the prevention of water pollution due to pipeline accidents (Berlin, 8-9 June 2005) would be invited to participate in it as observers.

VII. Venue and dates for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the third joint special session

38. Mr. Piacente informed the Bureau that the Italian Government is currently considering

inviting the CoP to hold its fourth meeting in 2006 in Rome. He would inform the Bureau and the Secretary of any new developments as soon as possible.

VIII. Future meetings of the Bureau

39. The Bureau agreed to meet jointly with the Working Group on Implementation on 14 September in Warsaw to finalize the draft declaration and other preparations for the high-level commitment meeting (see item II (a)).

40. The Bureau, also taking into account a number of issues of common concern to the CoP and the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention, such as the: (i) Promotion of the early entry into force of the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters – third joint special session of the two governing bodies, preferably to be held in 2006; (ii) Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Hamburg seminar, which will be prepared by the joint expert group in 2006; and (iii) Outcome of the work of the joint expert group to draw up guidelines/best practices for pipeline safety, concluded that the:

(a) Implementation report and the guidelines/good practices should preferably be discussed jointly and possible decisions on them taken by the two governing bodies at a joint meeting. They could be eventually handled by the governing bodies at separate meetings, however such an approach would limit the scope of discussion and the expected impact of the two documents;

(b) Review of the steps taken to ratify the Civil Liability Protocol, requires a joint meeting, which in accordance with the decision of the Ministers, taken at the second joint special session in Kiev, should preferably be held in 2006. However, a decision whether to organize the third joint special session in 2006 should be made jointly by the Bureaux of the two governing bodies taking into account the number of ratifications at the beginning of 2006.

41. Therefore, the Bureau requested its Chairperson to communicate the above conclusions to the Chairman of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention and to put forward a proposal to organize a one-day joint meeting of the two Bureaux in the first quarter of 2006 in order to jointly discuss these and other issues.

IX. Informal consultation between the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental Conventions

42. The Secretary informed the Bureau on the next meeting between the Bureau of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) and the Bureaux of the governing bodies of the UNECE environmental legal instruments to take place in Geneva on 6 June 2005. The key theme of the meeting would be the human and financial resources required to implement the activities under the UNECE environmental agreements.

43. The Bureau considered the meeting to be of importance to its further work and the work of focal points from different instruments at the national level and decided that its Chairperson and

also the Chairman of the Working Group on Implementation would represent the governing body of the Industrial Accidents Convention at this meeting.

X. Plan of meetings in 2005

18 March	First meeting of the Steering Group to draw up safety guidelines/good practice for pipeline safety and to prepare the workshop on the prevention of water pollution due to pipeline accidents (Berlin)
20 May	First meeting of the Working Group on the Development of the Convention (Geneva)
8-9 June	Workshop on the prevention of water pollution due to pipeline accidents (Berlin)
10 June	Second meeting of the Steering Group to draw up safety guidelines/good practice for pipeline safety (Berlin)
12-13 September	Training session on drawing up national implementation reports (Warsaw)
14 September	Joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation to prepare the high-level commitment meeting (Warsaw)
22-23 September	Third meeting of the Steering Group to draw up safety guidelines/good practice for pipeline safety (Geneva)
October	Second consultation of the points of contact and first meeting of the Task force on the UNECE IAN System (Italy)
10-11 November	Seventh meeting of the joint expert group on water and industrial accidents (Geneva)
15 December	High-level commitment meeting within the assistance programme (Geneva)

XI. Other business

44. Mr. Ludwiczak informed the Bureau on the state of drawing up draft guidelines on promoting the application of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums, to be submitted for consideration by the Parties to the Aarhus Convention at their second meeting (25-27 May 2005, Almaty). They are available at: (<http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop2/mop2.docI.htm>).

45. Mr. Tomasz Zweglinski, Chief of the Foreign Cooperation Unit, made a presentation on the history and mission of the Main School of the Fire Service.

XII. Closing of the meeting of the Bureau

46. Mr. Ludwiczak, speaking also on behalf of the Bureau members, expressed appreciation to the Polish authorities for their valuable input to the activities under the Convention and to the Main School of the Fire Service for inviting the Bureau to meet in Warsaw.

47. Mr. Grosset concluded that the meeting was successful in drawing up a concrete plan of activities under the Convention in 2005 and in defining the role of the Bureau in their implementation. He thanked all Bureau members, invited participants and the Secretary for their active participation at the meeting.