

**UNECE Convention on the Transboundary  
Effects of Industrial Accidents**

**UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary  
Watercourses and International Lakes**

**Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents**

**18<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE JOINT AD HOC EXPERT GROUP  
ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS  
and of the  
ADVISORY BOARD OF THE PROJECT ON TAILINGS SAFETY IN THE CAUCASUS**

7 September 2018  
Tsaghkadzor, Armenia

**Meeting Minutes**



UNECE 2018

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Peter Kovacs – Co-Chair of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG) from the Water Convention – and Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei – JEG Co-Chair from the Industrial Accidents Convention and Chair of the Advisory Board (AB) of the project on tailings safety in the Caucasus managed and implemented by the German Environment Agency. The meeting was a combined meeting between the JEG and the Advisory Board.

Mr. Winkelmann-Oei opened the meeting and welcomed the participants (see attached list of participants). Ms. Claudia Kamke (UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention) serviced the meeting.

## **2. Review of the implementation of the project on tailings safety in Armenia and Georgia**

Participants discussed the implementation of the project on tailings safety in Armenia and Georgia (2018-2019), most notably their observations and findings from the training of trainers (Tsaghkadzor, Armenia, 4-6 September 2018). They concluded that the training had been successful and agreed on a number of improvements to be made in the checklist for the next AB meeting, including to give more weight to critical questions in the evaluation and to integrate vulnerabilities into the Tailings Hazard Index (THI). The Group welcomed the application of the methodology in Armenia as an effective tool for improving the safety of tailings management facilities (TMFs) and preventing accidental water pollution.

Ms. Kristine Sahakyan, EcoPeace, presented a video and the results from a field exercise at a tailings facility close to the transboundary Debed River held on 4 July 2018 in Armenia under the project. The participants welcomed the organization of the exercise, including the application of the UNECE Checklist for Transboundary Contingency Planning, developed by the JEG, and the proposals presented to further improve the checklist. At the same time, participants regretted that the exercise had not used the International Warning and Alert System on the Kura River. Ms Sahakyan explained the communication units will be adjusted and updated to the structure elaborated with the International Warning and Alert System to the Kura River Catchment worked out during a joint project with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Vano Grigolashvili, Rural Development for Future Georgia, presented the planned activities in Georgia under the project, including the 12 TMFs. Ms. Oleksandra Logunova presented the THI done for Armenia (23 TMFs), Georgia (5 TMFs), Hungary (35 TMFs), Kyrgyzstan (16 TMFs), Romania (119 TMFs) and Serbia (23 TMFs). Participants welcomed the mapping and invited Mr. Grigolashvili to provide the information about the additional 7 TMFs he had presented. Belarus also offered to collect information about its TMFs, stressing that the number be very low.

## **3. Other on-going and planned TMF projects**

Ms. Kamke on behalf of the Industrial Accidents Convention Secretariat presented a new project on strengthening the safety of mining operations, in particular TMFs, in Kazakhstan and beyond in Central Asia (2018-2019), which was being implemented by Kazakhstan, under the auspices of UNECE and with the financial support by Switzerland. She informed participants about the project objective and upcoming activities and welcomed the contribution by JEG members. Mr Winkelmann-Oei proposed to integrate the JEG actively to provide guidance for the project implementation. A respective JEG meeting should be held

back-to-back to discuss joint amendments to the TMF methodology elaborated within the previous pilot projects guided by the German Environment Agency.

Mr. Farkhat Seifulov, Focal Point from Kazakhstan under the Industrial Accidents Convention, expressed his gratitude being invited to the Caucasian project and expressed his commitment to further cooperation and the implementation of the TMF methodology in his country. Mr. Nurai Satimov, Ministry of Energy, also highlighted the interest of Kazakhstan to implement the TMF methodology in his country, notably to improve their expert knowledge in this area, and to possibly also review and adjust the respective legislation in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Winkelmann-Oei suggested taking also the transboundary context into account. An opportunity could be a joint approach/training together with Kyrgyz experts in the project and stressing that synergies with the Caucasian project implemented by Germany be sought in the further project implementation.

Mr. Adam Kovacs, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), informed participants about a planned project on improving tailings safety in Romania (2019, Phase I) and Serbia (2020, Phase II), financed by Germany. The project would lead to the preparation of a TMF inventory, notably the identification of hotspots in the Danube region, which would also be mapped accordingly. Also, the TMF methodology would be further developed taking land use planning and risk assessment aspects into account. The JEG will be continuously integrated and informed in the further proceeding of this project. The JEG participants welcomed all these activities and highlighted the benefit for all UNECE countries. Also, the TMF methodology will be significantly improved and could serve as an international standard for raising the safety level to TMFs in every UNECE country and in especially in the light of the dramatic TMF failure in Brazil 2015, also worldwide.

#### **4. Draft safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water retention**

Co-Chair Mr. Winkelmann-Oei informed participants about the completed work on the development of the draft safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water retention, stressing that their endorsement by the governing bodies of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions was expected in October and December 2018 respectively. He clarified that the draft guidelines had been divided into two parts – general recommendations and technical and organizational recommendations – and suggested the application/testing of the guidelines during a follow-up project. The JEG took note of the information provided and welcomed the proposal to organize a follow-up activity to test the guidelines. Several JEG members, i.e. from Germany, Hungary and Romania, expressed interest to support such activity. Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs offered to look for possible financing.

Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs suggested that a promotional postcard on the JEG safety guidelines for firefighting water retention (and other JEG guidance) should be prepared. He reported that the postcards developed for the Water Convention were quite popular at the World Water Forum and suggested that a similar approach be taken for the JEG. The participants welcomed the proposal, inviting JEG members to provide funding for this and asking the secretariat to explore possibilities to use in-house resources for this at the same time.

## **5. Transboundary exercises and contingency planning seminar in 2018**

Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs informed participants about the transboundary exercise in Hungary, planned for 2 October 2018, which had to be postponed several times for different reasons. He clarified that the exercise will be held at an oil refinery plant near Budapest (Seveso upper tier establishment) and that a workshop on contingency planning would be held back-to-back, however, that only few participants had registered to date for the workshop. The participants welcomed the organization of the transboundary exercise and advised that the contingency planning workshop should be postponed to next year, if feasible, to allow a broader participation, including from representatives of international river commissions. Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs agreed with the proposal, reporting that Hungary would have the ICPDR presidency in 2019 and that the contingency planning seminar could be organized in that framework too. Mr. A. Kovacs supported the idea of a coordinated workshop with ICPDR and offered support to spread other JEG guidance, such as the firefighting water retention guidelines, to ICPDR member states, as was previously done for the checklist for transboundary contingency planning. Participants agreed to also invite representatives from other river commissions, such as from Central Asia, to the seminar.

## **6. Further activities by JEG in 2018**

In view of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the JEG, founded in 1998, Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs informed participants about a 45-minutes segment on the JEG and its work in the past 20 years which would be held at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties of the Water Convention (Astana, 8-10 October 2018). He reported that he was currently preparing the presentation and invited JEG members to share with him pictures from past meetings, notably for the meetings held in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016. A similar event would be held at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Industrial Accidents Convention (Geneva, 4-6 December 2018), including as part of a side event. The JEG welcomed the planned events to celebrate the anniversary and asked that the presentation be shared with the JEG after the event.

## **7. Implementation of the workplan for 2019-2020**

Ms. Kamke on behalf of the Industrial Accidents Convention Secretariat presented the JEG workplan for 2019-2020, developed by the secretariat based on JEG's advice, and which had been agreed by the JEG co-Chairs and the Bureaux of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions. The participants reiterated their commitment to implementing the plan. Co-Chair Mr. P. Kovacs highlighted the need to promote the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for pipelines. Mr. Walther Reinhard (Germany) recalled the previous UNEP project on the Druzhba pipeline, which used the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines and suggested to develop a related methodology on that basis. Ms. Lubov Hertmann from Belarus informed participants that the Ministry of Environment of Belarus had strong interest in introducing into its national practices the use of such a checklist, if a related project be implemented. The work could be carried out in close cooperation with the JEG and could integrate respective trainings for inspectors and operators. The JEG participants welcomed this activity and proposed a similar approach as it has been proofed valuable by the TMF checklist methodology. Mr. Dmitro Pikarenia stressed the need to also take into consideration land-use planning considerations and transboundary water pollution. Participants welcomed the information provided and agreed to look for related financing.

**8. Date for the next meeting of the AB and JEG**

Participants agreed to try to hold preferably one JEG meeting per year, depending on the availability of funds. The meetings should be held back to back with on-going project activities, if feasible, such as the training in Romania in mid-2019, the final project workshop under the Caucasian project in September/October 2019, the subregional workshop under the Kazakh project in autumn 2019 or others to be defined. The secretariat was requested to propose a date later in 2019, in cooperation with the JEG co-Chairs. The next AB meeting was scheduled for March or April 2019 in Georgia.

**9. Closing of the meeting**

The Co-Chairs thanked the secretariat for the preparation of the meeting and the AB and JEG members for their active participation, before closing the meeting at 5 pm.

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Annex – List of participants

1. Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (JEG co-Chair, Germany, AB Chair)
2. Mr. Peter Kovacs (JEG co-Chair, Hungary)
3. Ms. Kristine Sahakyan (Project Manager, EcoPeace, Armenia)
4. Ms. Lubov Hertman (JEG member, Belarus)
5. Mr. Walther Reinhard (AB member, Germany)
6. Mr. Ferenc Madai (AB member, Hungary)
7. Mr. Adam Kovacs (AB member, ICPDR)
8. Mr. Farkhat Seifulov (Focal Point, UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, Kazakhstan)
9. Mr. Yerkin Duisenbayev (Project coordinator, Kazakhstan)
10. Mr. Nurai Satimov (Project contact point, Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan)
11. Mr. Medetbek Omurbekov (JEG member, Kyrgyzstan)
12. Mr. Vitalii Mutaf (JEG member, Republic of Moldova)
13. Mr. Zoltan Torok (JEG and AB member, Romania)
14. Mr. Dusan Kostic (Jaroslav Černi Institute for Development of Water Resources, AB member, Serbia)
15. Ms. Suzana Milutinovic (JEG member, Serbia)
16. Mr. Claes-Hakan Carlsson (JEG member, Sweden)
17. Ms. Galyna Kovalchuk (AB member, Ukraine)
18. Mr. Dmitro Pikarenia (Project expert, Ukraine)
19. Mr. Dmitry Rudakov (Project expert, Ukraine)
20. Ms. Claudia Kamke (UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention)