

13 January 2020

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Bureau

Forty-second meeting

Oslo, 26-27 September 2019

Minutes of the meeting

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair opened the meeting and the Deputy Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Environment Division welcomed Bureau members.

2. The following Bureau members were present: Torill Tandberg (Norway), Chair; Michael Struckl (Austria), Vice-Chair; Jasmina Karba (Slovenia), Vice-Chair; Evgeny Baranovsky (Belarus); Pavel Forint (Czechia); Rolf- Jan Hoeve (European Union); Wivi-Ann Wagello-Sjölund (Finland); Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany); Suzana Milutinovic (Serbia); and Martin Merkofer (Switzerland). Mr. Leo Iberl (Germany), Chair of the Working Group on Implementation (WGI), also attended the meeting. The meeting was serviced by the ECE secretariat.

3. The Bureau adopted the agenda (CP.TEIA/2019/B.3/Agenda) without changes.

2. Implementation of the 2019-2020 workplan

(a) Resources

4. The Bureau was informed by the secretariat of the resources made available and confirmed by Parties for the implementation of the 2019-2020 workplan. The secretariat also provided information on the sending of official letters to Parties, in line with the sustainable financial mechanism. The letters had triggered responses from several countries, most notably France, which pledged another EUR 200,000 to support the implementation of the long-term strategy. Additional financial contributions, since the last Bureau meeting, had also been provided by Austria (EUR 8,000 – an increased contribution) and Germany (EUR 15,883, to support the work of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG)).

5. It was thanks in particular to the additional pledge by France that the secretariat was in a position to operate normally and plan for the further implementation of the workplan in the biennium – whereas before, expenditures had to be kept to an absolute minimum. This had also impacted the engagement of additional support; the consultancy supporting the secretariat had to be reduced to 25% for the period August – December 2019 – for JEG-related work, as these were the only funds available. Overall, the share of financing of the workplan has risen from 48% to 61%. Uncertainty remained with respect to the

implementation of numerous workplan items, in particular the launch of national policy dialogues in countries with transition. Furthermore, funding was not sufficient to engage all the staffing needed to implement the workplan. The mobilization of Parties, through the Bureau, was important, in order to close this funding gap, and move to full implementation of envisaged workplan activities in 2019-2020.

6. Bureau members asked whether the information included in the presentation could be shared with the Bureau, which the secretariat confirmed.

7. The Chair reported back on the meeting of the small group on financing, comprised of herself, Ms. Karba, Ms. Wagello-Sjölund and Mr. Baranowski, who had met with the secretariat prior to the Bureau meeting in the evening of 25 September 2019 and reflected on several ideas for attracting additional funds for the implementation of the workplan. These ideas were spanning from the use of development cooperation financing to approaching the European Union (including the European Commission, DG ECHO), the implementation of bi- and multilateral cooperation projects, such as exercises, and the use of existing funding mechanisms. At the same time, the Chair stressed that it was the responsibility of the entire Bureau to engage in efforts to attract the missing funds required to ensure the full implementation of the workplan.

8. Ms. Wagello-Sjölund informed the Bureau that as a result of the discussion, the Finnish presidency invited the secretary to the EU Civil Protection Working Group (“Prociv”) on 14 November 2019, in order to present on the Convention and its linkages with EU legislation. This was of particular interest due to amendments to the Union Civil Protection Mechanism in March 2019, which placed an enhanced emphasis on transboundary risks and cooperation.

9. The Bureau welcomed the information provided and the efforts by Parties to provide financial resources for the workplan’s implementation. It encouraged all Parties to further strive to make resources available so as to ensure that progress is made towards the implementation of the workplan, and the long-term strategy.

(b) Activities

10. On the basis of the above, the Bureau was presented with information on the implementation of and the planning for activities in 2019-2020. The secretariat and Bureau members provided information on the implementation of the core and non-core activities, as outlined below.

(i) Core activities

Outreach, awareness-raising and strategic partnerships:

11. The secretariat shared information on the continuous implementation of **targeted communication**, such as the webpage updates undertaken, such as:

- Including the *Words into Action Guidelines: Implementation Guide for Man-made and Technological Hazards* under 2018 publications
- Updating the page on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework with information on the UNDRR Global Assessment Report 2019 (GAR2019)
- Updating the JEG-webpage
- Creating pages for the 2019-2020 core and non-core activities.

12. The secretariat also shared information on the issued press-releases, news pieces, blog posts and the translation of the video “*The benefits of enhanced cooperation between land-use planning and industrial safety*” into Russian, in advance of the sub-regional land-use

planning workshop for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Chisinau, 22-24 May 2019). Facebook and twitter have also been used as means to communicate about the Convention's work.

13. Furthermore, the secretariat highlighted the development of a brochure on JEG and 4 postcards on the safety guidelines and good industry practices for oil terminals, TMFs, pipelines and firefighting water management retention, which have been made possible thanks to financing from Germany, through the UNECE Water Convention.

14. The Bureau welcomed the communication efforts by the secretariat, which it encouraged it to keep up. It reflected on the increasing use of social media also in national administrations.

15. Bureau members and the secretariat reported on their **participation in international and regional meetings and forums:**

16. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei reported on the Conference on Raw Materials and Environment 2019 (Berlin, 19-20 February 2019), organized by the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA). He highlighted some key points mentioned at the Conference, such as the need for smart technology in view of climate change and the discussion on a label for responsible mining, summing up that the Conference was a success.

17. The secretariat reported on the attendance of the OECD Workshop on mining and green growth in the EECCA region (Paris, 19 April 2019) at which it presented ongoing work on mine tailings safety under the framework of the Convention, including related guidance materials, during a dedicated session on tailings.

18. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei reported on his attendance of the 16th International Symposium on Loss Prevention and Safety Promotion in the Process Industries (Delft, the Netherlands, 16-19 June 2019), at which he made a presentation on the work and guidance materials of the UNECE Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG).

19. The Vice-Chairs and the secretariat reported on their attendance of the UNIDO Conference on Ensuring Industrial Safety: the role of government, regulations, standards and new technologies (co-organized with Roztechnadzor, Russian Federation, Vienna, 30-31 May 2019). With this Conference, UNIDO was embarking on embracing the issue of industrial safety for the first time more substantively, and was in the process of defining its approach and the scope of issues to be covered. Bilateral discussions with Roztechnadzor were also held in the margins. The Bureau agreed that the Vice-Chairs and the secretariat pursue further cooperation with UNIDO, in follow-up to the Conference. Such cooperation could encompass technical cooperation/assistance and outreach to countries beyond the UNECE region. The Bureau also highlighted that UNIDO's engagement in the inter-agency coordination group on industrial accidents as important.

20. The Bureau took note of the information provided. It welcomed the participation in international and regional meetings and forums by Bureau members and the secretariat.

21. The Chair provided information on her outreach to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss opportunities for maintaining and possibly enhancing the support provided to the UNECE Environment Division, and in particular the Industrial Accidents Convention. The secretariat had made use of its mission to service the Bureau meeting in Oslo to attend a back-to-back working visit at the Ministry of Environment, to discuss these matters. The Bureau took note of this information.

22. The secretariat and Bureau members reported on **meetings with partner organizations to coordinate joint activities, incl. inter-agency coordination meetings.** The Inter-agency cooperation meeting on industrial/chemical accidents which, thanks to its

facilitation and outreach, will be hosted by ILO in 2020.¹ It has been thanks to the secretariat's engagement that several organizations, such as UNDRR, UNIDO and ILO, re-engaged in the inter-agency group. The Bureau welcomed the rotating organization of the Inter-agency meetings and the re-engagement of several organizations in the Group, which it considered important to share information and avoid duplication of activities.

23. Mr. Hoeve reported on the key decisions taken at the EU Seveso Expert Group meeting which was held back-to-back with seminar on the underground gas storage, biogas and LNG sites (Sibiu, Romania, 14-15 May 2019).

24. The secretariat then shared information on its meetings with UNEP, OECD and other partner organizations during the informal meeting on the follow up UNEA4 resolutions on Sustainable Infrastructure and Mineral Resource Governance, organized by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (Neuchatel, 18 June 2019). This meeting provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices on TMFs, the TMF methodology,² and ongoing capacity-development projects to support the strengthening of TMF safety. Following the meeting, UNECE was contacted by UNEP with the proposal to co-convene the regional consultation for Central Asia on the Global Tailings Standard, an initiative by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), UNEP and Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI).

25. The secretariat also reported on the upcoming 5th meeting of the inter-agency coordination group on chemicals management, convened by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) annually since 2016. It highlighted that the Convention participates since 2018 in these meetings which provide an excellent opportunity to reach out to other organizations working on related topics, including UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, OECD, WHO, World Bank and UNITAR.

26. The Chair shared information on the outcome of the **NATECH risk management** workshop (Potsdam, 5-7 September 2018), held under the auspices of the workplan of the OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents. The workshop had concluded that further work and guidance on NATECH was important, involving lead countries and relevant organizations, namely OECD, EU Joint Research Centre, UN Environment / OCHA Joint Unit, UNECE, and others. The secretariat provided supplementary information on its co-organization of the workshop's session on transboundary cooperation on NaTech risk management, namely its chairing and the delivery of a presentation.

27. The secretariat reported on its cooperation with OECD, UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit and national delegates as part of the OECD Steering Group on NATECH, in follow-up to the workshop. Thanks to additional funding from France, it was able to continue its follow-up as part of the Group and to engage more actively as of 2020. The Bureau agreed that the secretariat continue to engage with partners and mandated it to be part of the NATECH III-Project and the respective Steering Group, to be formed following the upcoming OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents. At the same time, it was mindful of OECD's leadership of the work on NATECH, under its workplan, and encouraged the secretariat to specifically focus on the transboundary perspective on NaTech risk management.

28. Furthermore, the secretariat shared information of its membership of the UNDRR Scientific and Technology Advisory Group (STAG) on NATECH, and its outreach to facilitate inclusion of other organizations, such as OECD.

¹ Following the Bureau meeting, the organization of this meeting was confirmed for September 2020.

² Developed by Germany, under the Convention's workplan

Facilitation of implementation:

1. Risk assessment

29. The Bureau member from Switzerland, Mr. Merkofer, who is leading the work of the small group on risk assessment, provided a progress update on the planned contracting for the preparation of a report on risk assessment methodologies. He recalled the enlarged membership of the small group on risk assessment. The group, previously consisting of Mr. Struckl (Vice-Chair from Austria), Ms. Karba (Vice-Chair from Slovenia), Mr. Merkofer (Switzerland) and Mr. Gonzalez (Switzerland), has been extended to include four new members of the Bureau and the WGI, namely Mr. Baranovsky (Belarus), Ms. Laura Vizbule (Latvia), Ms. Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia) and Ms. Milutinovic (Serbia). It is serviced by the secretariat.

30. Mr. Merkofer thanked the small group on risk assessment for having provided their comments on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the consultant, which was prepared by Switzerland in cooperation with the secretariat. He presented the proposed structure and content of the report, and emphasized that the purpose of such a report was to share the methodologies used in the UNECE region. It was not to overrule the state-of-the-art technology, but to identify additional risk reduction measures and to identify the possible severity of the damage.

31. In terms of the key next steps in the process, Mr. Merkofer informed the Bureau that Switzerland and the secretariat, in cooperation with the small group on risk assessment, will finalize the ToR for the contract. Delays have been occurring as Switzerland was not in a position to engage a contractor directly and agreed with the secretariat that this be done through the United Nations, following the procurement rules and regulations. It has thus been proposed that the study be completed in 2021, with the aim of presenting it to CoP-12 in 2022.

32. The Bureau took note that the report will not be completed in time for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention in December 2020, and welcomed the fact that it will be presented to the following, twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2022.

2. SDGs/Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

33. The secretariat provided information on its contributions, in cooperation with an external consultant, to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) 2019 Global Assessment Report for Disaster Risk Reduction (GAR19), namely Chapter 3.1.8. on chemical/industrial hazards. The Chair congratulated the secretariat for its efforts in researching and writing this chapter and for the dedicated mention on the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, which is one of the few organizations described in detail in the GAR19 report.

34. The Chair provided information on her attendance of the Global Platform for DRR (Geneva, 13-17 May 2019), and the Vice Chair from Slovenia, Ms. Jasmina Karba, provided information on her membership of the UNDRR Steering Group of the Global Risk Assessment Framework, and envisaged activities. The Chair and the secretariat expressed disappointment that man-made and technological hazards were given little visibility at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. It was agreed that the secretariat will liaise with UNDRR on how this issue can be better promoted and advocated at future Global or Regional Platforms, taking account of its technical contribution thus far, incl. also the *Words into Action Guidelines Implementation Guide on man-made/technological hazards*.

35. The secretariat furthermore provided information on its contribution as an external reviewer of the chapter on "Industrial and Energy facilities" of the EU Science for Disaster Risk Management 2020 report, following an invitation by the EU Joint Research Centre.

3. Land-use planning and industrial safety

36. The secretariat informed the Bureau of the planned funding and engagement of a consultant by the European Investment Bank, to develop an online information repository of good practices on land-use planning and industrial safety, taking account of environmental assessments (EIA and SEA), public participation, information to the public, and disaster risk reduction, including in a transboundary context. This activity will require collaboration across multiple UNECE teams and input from partners and countries within the UNECE region. The preparation of a ToR is underway and once agreed, it is envisaged to implement this activity in 2020.

37. The secretary made the link between the information repository, the work on land-use planning and the siting of hazardous activities (Guidance, seminar in Mechelen in May 2018 and sub-regional workshops in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus during 2019-2020) and the new cross-sectoral UNECE “Nexus” initiative on “Smart sustainable cities for all ages” which she was coordinating for the first year. The nexus aims offer an integrated and holistic approach to respond to sustainable urban development challenges in the UNECE region, by strengthening bonds across UNECE sub-programmes and partnerships with other international organizations. She informed the Bureau of a publication being developed by the secretariat in cooperation with external consultants on the topic of smart and sustainable cities. She invited the Bureau members to submit nominations to the secretariat for experts to be part of the Expert Review Group, reviewing this publication, which was also envisaged to feature a section on disaster risk reduction and resilience. Such nominations could be by the Bureau themselves or by other independent experts. It is envisaged that the Group will review the publication in spring 2020 (May is envisaged).

38. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

4. Fire-fighting water and retention strategies

39. The secretariat updated the Bureau on the progress towards the publishing of the safety guidelines and good practices for fire-fighting water retention, and thanked Germany for funding this activity. Following the incorporation of the changes agreed at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat will prepare the overall layout (including design and graphics) and additional pages (including the front and back covers, and the foreword, background and acknowledgements sections) and submit for publishing in the coming weeks. The layout and translation of the additional pages of the publication into French and Russian will take place thereafter. The secretariat will promote the safety guidelines by sending announcements to its Parties and beneficiary countries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme (and to other contacts, where relevant), and by distributing them at meetings and events. The Bureau members were invited to distribute the guidelines at relevant meetings and events and via email to their colleagues and contacts. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

5. Contingency planning

40. The secretariat and the Co-Chair of the JEG from Germany, Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei, shared information on the upcoming *Seminar on accidental transboundary water pollution prevention – contingency planning, early warning, mitigation* (Budapest, 4-5 November 2019), organized by Hungary and UNECE, under the auspices of the JEG and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The seminar will provide an opportunity to implement the strategy on cooperation with international river basin commissions, as endorsed by the Bureau at its last meeting (Geneva, 13 February 2019). The conclusions of the seminar, along with the presentations, will be made available on the webpage after the seminar. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

Servicing of intergovernmental bodies:

41. The Chair of the Working Group on Implementation (WGI) shared information about the work undertaken and planned by the Group, notably regarding the current reporting round for which the reporting templates were updated and circulated to all countries in June 2019. The secretariat clarified that due to additional changes in the reporting format and guidelines, as requested by the WGI at its 37th meeting in February, the finalization and translation of the documents could be completed in June only. The Chair reported that the WGI meeting to review the implementation reports was planned for early 2020. The Chair also reported that Ms. Anneke Raap (Netherlands) had been replaced by her compatriot Ms. Nicolette Bouman as a member of the WGI. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

42. The Co-Chair of the JEG reported that the next JEG meeting would be held back-to-back with the above seminar on contingency planning (Budapest, 5 (pm) November 2019) to review the results of the seminar and ongoing activities, notably on tailings safety. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

(ii) Non-core, including assistance activities**Assistance and Cooperation Programme:**

43. The secretariat presented an overview of activities carried out to date and planned for the current biennium under the Assistance and Cooperation programme. It also shared information on its attendance of the regional meeting of the Heads of Emergency Situations of Central Asia (Bishkek, 11-12 July 2019) and the XVII meeting of the CIS Inter-State Council for Industrial Safety (St. Petersburg, 12-13 September 2019).

44. The Bureau member from Germany asked a question on measuring the satisfaction of participants with a given assistance activity. The secretariat clarified that evaluations are conducted by the secretariat through evaluation questionnaires which participants fill out having taken part in the activities under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme. The summary report of evaluations is then made available on the respective meeting webpage.

45. The Chair shared her positive impressions of the [sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety](#) for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Chisinau, 16-17 May 2019), which she attended and chaired.

46. The Bureau took note of the implemented and endorsed the planned activities.

Other assistance activities:

47. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei provided information on the activities implemented and planned under three UBA-lead Projects on Improving the Safety of TMFs in (1) the Caucasian region, (2) along the Danube, and (3) in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. He highlighted the results from an analysis of the causes and impacts of tailings accidents and informed participants about the update of the TMF checklist methodology under the tailings projects implemented in-kind by Germany under the Convention. The Bureau welcomed the ongoing and planned activities on tailings safety by Germany, further to those financed by Switzerland, stressing the importance of this work under the Convention.

Awareness-raising in and outreach to other regions:

48. The secretariat provided information on its contacts with other international organizations, notably UNESCAP, to support awareness-raising in and outreach to other regions. The secretary to the Convention delivered a video message and presentation to the UNESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, to highlight the Convention's work, linkages (also in view of overlapping membership) and opportunities for strengthening cooperation. The Bureau welcomed this information and the outreach efforts by the secretariat, and suggested that these be pursued, in line with the long-term strategy.

IAN system:

49. The secretariat provided information on the results of the IAN System connectivity test and of the 6th Online Consultation of the Points of Contact. It also informed the Bureau that Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (all non-Parties) have recently registered in the System. Among the Parties, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Finland were still not registered. Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the secretariat that a Point of Contact had been appointed (Ministry of Security, Protection and Rescue Sector, Operational and Communication Centre BH-112), but to the date of the Bureau meeting no action has been taken by the Point of Contact to register in the System³. The Bureau members took note of the information provided and agreed to reach out to Montenegro to encourage registration. The Bureau Member from Finland informed the Bureau that she would liaise with the respective authority to clarify the matter.⁴

3. Follow-up to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties**(a) Amendment of the Convention**

50. The secretariat reported on the actions taken, as requested by the Chair at the last Bureau meeting (Geneva, 13 February 2019), notably the sending of a letter by the UNECE Executive Secretary to the Russian Federation, and follow-up engagement with the Russian ambassador. A response has been received and shared with the Chair. The Chair shared information on this response, which indicates the Russian Federation's openness to convene informal consultations – however, not earlier than in fall 2020. She presented to the Bureau the next steps she had agreed upon with the Vice-Chairs, notably to engage in early 2020, with the suggestion for a meeting in fall 2020, before CoP-11. In view of this development, it was proposed to include in the agenda of CoP-11 information-sharing on the consultation (if so held), and not to re-circulate the amendment as such. The secretariat also pointed to the possibility to organize an extra-ordinary CoP, should agreement on the amendment be reached earlier than CoP-12. The Bureau took note of the information provided.

(b) Long-term strategy and communication, outreach and engagement strategy

51. The secretariat reported on actions taken to make the [long-term strategy](#), the [communication, outreach and engagement strategy](#) as well as other CoP-10 decisions available as free-standing documents on the Convention's website, and to raise their awareness with focal points, as requested by the Bureau at its last meeting.

52. The Bureau welcomed this approach and agreed that a dedicated item on the implementation of both strategies – along with the decision fostering implementation of the sustainable financial mechanism – be scheduled at the next meeting of the Bureau (Bonn, June 2020), in advance of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-11). This future discussion will be combined with the substantive considerations on the implementation of the long-term strategy with regard to new and emerging risks, following the discussion of this matter at the last Bureau meeting (Geneva, 13 February).

³ Following the meeting on 6 November 2019, the Operational and Communication Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina has registered in the IAN System.

⁴ Already on the second day of the Bureau meeting, the Government Situation Centre of the Prime Minister's Office, Finland has registered in the IAN System.

4. Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties

53. The Bureau discussed the arrangements for the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be hosted by Germany in Bonn, 1–3 December 2020.

Site visit

54. At the joint meeting of the Bureau and the WGI (Geneva, 12 February 2019), Mr. Winkelmann-Oei (Germany) provided information that Germany was in the process of organizing a site visit as part of CoP-11. The lead German competent authority, the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, has asked industry associations for proposals for such a site visit, and decided on a proposed site visit, on this basis. The proposal was presented by Mr. Winkelmann-Oei, German Bureau member, with the idea to organize a site visit on the last day of the CoP, namely on 3 December 2020. The Bureau discussed the modalities and length of the CoP and agreed that a CoP lasting three full days would be important, in view of the site visit (½day) and an envisaged seminar on TMF safety (further discussed below). In this respect, to ensure that delegates would not leave the CoP after a morning site visit on the last day, it agreed to ask Germany whether it be possible to schedule the site visit on the 2nd day of the CoP, namely 2 December in the morning. The Bureau thanked Germany for the organization of CoP, and the site visit.

Theme of CoP-11 seminar and evaluation of Assistance and Cooperation Programme

55. The secretariat presented the background paper on the seminar themes for the Conference of the Parties and the evaluation of effectiveness of Assistance and Cooperation Programme. The Bureau acknowledged that the issue of managing tailings facilities was important and welcomed the ongoing work under the Convention in this regard. The Bureau agreed to organize a seminar on mine tailings at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bonn, 1-3 December 2020) and decided to establish a small group preparing the seminar. Ms. Tandberg, Mr. Struckl, Mr. Winkelmann-Oei, and Switzerland⁵ volunteered to be part of the small group. The Bureau encouraged the invitation of Brazil, Chile and other important mining countries, including beyond the region, in the seminar. The Bureau also exchanged initial ideas for the design of the seminar as a basis for further discussion in the small group. Different ideas on the length of the seminar were exchanged, starting from the idea to organize a ½ day seminar, so as to ensure that there would be sufficient time and scope for the regular CoP business. The secretariat mentioned that if there was interest in engagement by countries from beyond the region, and also partner organizations, a full one day seminar may be more suitable.

56. The Bureau agreed to address the evaluation of effectiveness of Assistance and Cooperation Programme at CoP-11 through a formal session which will comprise a presentation of the implemented assistance activities, ongoing evaluations of these and the external evaluation of the *Project on strengthening implementation of and accession to the Convention in Central Asia* implemented in 2016-2019. It will also aim to highlight the continuous evolution of the "Assistance Programme" into the "Assistance and Cooperation Programme" and the increased cooperation among its beneficiaries.

57. Furthermore, the Bureau agreed to consider NATECH among the themes for a possible seminar for the CoP in 2022 (or 2024), to be organized in cooperation with OECD, UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit, possibly the EU Joint Research Centre, UNDRR and other partners, which would fit well with the NATECH-III Project.

⁵ Following the meeting, Mr. Merkofer confirmed that Ms. Martine Rohn-Bossard will join the small group on behalf of Switzerland. Mr. Struckl then also confirmed that he would be willing to join the group on behalf of Austria.

5. Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

58. The secretariat presented the JEG background paper and highlighted a number of challenges observed by the Co-Chairs and secretariat in the JEG work in recent years, among others, frequent changes in the composition of the JEG, the existence of several subsidiary expert groups holding additional meetings that the secretariat struggles to service, the nomination procedures for experts, the inclusion of ad hoc tasks during a biennium, etc. The secretariat highlighted that it was no longer possible to service JEG with regular budget resources, and that extrabudgetary resources were required to support its work. The Bureau reviewed the challenges and the proposed solutions presented by the secretariat. The JEG Co-Chair expressed support to the new strategy, raising financial concerns regarding its implementation which seemed to put the responsibility for funding on the Co-Chairs only. The secretariat clarified that the responsibility would be on the lead parties and would not rest on the Co-Chairs themselves. Meetings of the governing bodies and the Bureau can help identify lead Parties. Following a thorough discussion of the background paper, the Bureau agreed on the following:

- The Bureau should pursue a stronger implementation of JEG strategy. To this end, the Bureau also re-elected Mr. Winkelmann-Oei as Co-Chair for the JEG in this biennium;
- The secretariat should summarize in a one-pager the way forward for the JEG, which should be agreed with the Chair before recirculation to the Bureau for approval and subsequent sharing with the Water Convention Bureau in October 2019;
- To avoid the inclusion of ad hoc tasks during a biennium, the JEG Co-Chairs should present future JEG tasks, including a related budget, to the Bureaux for approval and inclusion into workplan;
- The secretariat will be able to service one JEG meeting per biennium in the future. Other subsidiary Groups of the JEG would meet without the secretariat's involvement. The secretariat will be able to service or attend the meetings of the subsidiary expert groups only, if financing is provided for this purpose.

6. Other business

59. The Bureau reviewed and provided comments on a draft survey on the Convention guidance materials, prepared by the secretariat, to raise awareness and gather feedback on their use. The Bureau welcomed the survey and suggested that it be circulated to all focal points, industry and other key partners upon the publication of the safety guidelines and good practices on firewater retention. Mr. Struckl pointed out the need to update some of the guidance documents (e.g. the safety guidelines for pipelines and the checklist for contingency planning) and volunteered to provide comments and suggestions by a next Bureau meeting.

60. Ms. Wagello-Sjölund suggested that the Bureau take some time at its next meeting to reflect on and evaluate the Bureau meeting, which possibly may not require receiving detailed information about implemented activities to effectively monitor the workplan implementation. Several members expressed support to the provision of detailed information on implementation to be able to provide guidance. The Bureau agreed to review its meetings, in view of finding a better balance between the need to monitor the workplan implementation and the level of detail required to do that.

7. Closure of the meeting

61. The Chair closed the meeting on 27 September 2019 at 2 p.m. She recalled that the next Bureau meeting has been set to take place in Bonn, Germany, 17-18 June 2020, back-to-back with a meeting of the small group on risk assessment (16 June).⁶

⁶ Following the meeting, it was agreed by the Bureau that its meeting take place from 16-17 June, back-to-back with the small group on financing meeting on 18 June 2020.