



UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

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

19th meeting of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

**MEETING OF THE
JOINT EXPERT GROUP ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

5 November 2019

1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Ministry of Interior, József Attila út. 2-4,
1051 Budapest, Hungary
Room 129, first floor

Minutes



2019

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Peter Kovacs (Hungary) – co-Chair of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents (JEG) from the Water Convention – and Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany) – JEG co-Chair from the Industrial Accidents Convention.

Mr. Winkelmann-Oei opened the meeting and welcomed the participants (see attached list of participants), in particular the representatives from international river commissions. Ms. Rebecca Wardle (UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention) serviced the meeting.

2. Follow up to the *Seminar on accidental transboundary water pollution prevention – contingency planning, early warning, mitigation*¹

The participants discussed the key findings and conclusions of the back-to-back *Seminar on accidental transboundary water pollution prevention – contingency planning, early warning, mitigation* (4 – 5 November 2019, Budapest). The key conclusions, as shown on the screen during the wrap up of the seminar, will be refined by the UNECE secretariat and the JEG co-Chairs, and circulated to all participants for comments. The comments will be integrated where practicable and a final version of the conclusions will be posted on the seminar webpage² in due course.

The participants welcomed the information provided in session I of the seminar by the representative of Eco Peace NGO on the joint testing of the Checklist by Armenia and Georgia, including the recommendations for improvements to the Checklist. It was decided that as a next step, further testing (preferably joint testing among riparian countries and river commissions) of the Checklist should be encouraged by UNECE countries. Recommendations for improvements to the text of the Checklist can be gathered from the testing and be considered for possible updating of the Checklist in the future, should such be decided by the Bureaux of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions, and included by the governing bodies³ in their respective workplans.

In follow-up to the seminar, the participants suggested that the following follow-up activities could be organized in the future:

- Transboundary exercises on accidental water pollution prevention and response (similar to those conducted in previous years in Latvia and Estonia⁴, and in Hungary⁵), involving the review and testing of the Checklist, could be conducted. Members of the JEG and representatives of the river commissions were encouraged to nominate their

¹ Information about the meeting can be found on the meeting webpage: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/meetings-and-events/industrial-accidents/joint-expert-group/2019/seminar-on-accidental-transboundary-water-pollution-prevention-contingency-planning-early-warning-mitigation/docs.html>

² Available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/meetings-and-events/industrial-accidents/joint-expert-group/2019/seminar-on-accidental-transboundary-water-pollution-prevention-contingency-planning-early-warning-mitigation/docs.html>

³ i.e. the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention

⁴ Transboundary trainings between the State Fire and Rescue Service (Latvia) and the Estonian Rescue Board in August 2018 in Salacgriva, Latvia, and in October 2018 in Kuresare, Estonia

⁵ Accidental water pollution exercise on the Danube River with possible transboundary effects, Százhalombatta Hungary, October 2018

countries/commissions to take the lead in the organizing of such an exercise, and to inform the Co-Chairs and the secretariat accordingly. Following a proposal by the Co-Chairs, such exercises could be organized in the future, with secured financing, subject to a decision by the Bureaux, and inclusion by the governing bodies of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions, in their respective future workplans.⁶

- Promoting and disseminating the Checklist by members of the JEG and the river commissions to their colleagues and contacts, and organizing the testing of the Checklist as well. Strategies for promoting the Checklist include email distributions, posting the Checklist on their organizations' webpages, bringing copies along to meetings and events. The co-Chair from Hungary proposed that the General Directorate of Hungary could review and, if possible, test the Checklist, and will confirm as soon as possible.
- A workshop or seminar could be organized under the auspices of the JEG, for the secretariats of the river commissions to attend and exchange experiences, technical information and knowledge, including on international warning, alert and monitoring systems, and to consider the possibility of implementing joint monitoring stations. As above, such a seminar could be organized, follow a proposal by the Co-Chairs, with secured financing, and if so decided by the Bureaux of both Conventions and included in the respective workplans of both Conventions.
- Regular exchange of information between the river commissions (including their secretariats and Working Groups), the JEG and the UNECE secretariat should take place in order to improve transparency and knowledge-sharing, and to avoid duplication of efforts.

3. Strengthening cooperation with the River Basin Commissions

Recognizing their related objectives in improving accidental water pollution prevention, preparedness and response across the region, the river commissions, JEG and UNECE agreed to enhance cooperation through the regular exchange of information, experiences and knowledge, and to take concerted efforts in their outreach to countries and the relevant stakeholders.

The participants discussed proposals for strengthening cooperation and suggested to pursue the following:

- Promote and test the guidance materials and checklists developed by the JEG on preventing transboundary accidental water pollution (e.g. on oil terminals, tailings safety, pipelines, firefighting water retention), e.g. through the organization of national and transboundary exercises (subject to inclusion in the workplans of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions)
- Invite representatives from international river commissions to attend the next Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention (Bonn, Germany, 1-3 December 2020) and the next Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention (2021), at which the participating river commissions may wish to host a side event to promote their work and their cooperation with the JEG and UNECE

⁶ E.g. next workplans 2021-22 for the Industrial Accidents Convention and 2022-2024 for the Water Convention.

- Invite members of the JEG and representatives of the UNECE Industrial Accidents or Water Conventions to meetings or events organized by the river commissions, in order to share knowledge and promote the relevant JEG guidance materials, UNECE and its Conventions
- Ensure regular information exchange between river commissions, the JEG and the UNECE secretariat about ongoing/planned activities, exercises, etc. The secretariat will follow up in the coming weeks with the representatives of the river commissions regarding the possible holding of a teleconference to explore possibilities for closer cooperation
- Jointly develop or contribute to the development of checklists based on the safety guidelines developed by the JEG, for example a Checklist for Pipelines, a Checklist for Oil Terminals and a Checklist for the Retention and Management of Firefighting Water.
- Develop a joint project proposal on an area of work relevant to both the JEG and river commissions (e.g. on improving accidental water pollution prevention, early warning and alarm systems, tailings safety, or the management and retention of firefighting water, etc.)

The JEG co-Chair from Hungary highlighted the budgetary resource limitations of the UNECE secretariat, noting that if meetings, workshops, exercises or other such activities are planned, a budget for the participation of and servicing by the UNECE secretariat, along with costs related to the organization of the meeting, should be taken into account.

4. Update on ongoing and planned tailings management facilities (TMFs) activities

The participants took note of the updates provided by: the co-Chair from Germany on the training of trainers event⁷ and the tailings management facilities (TMF) methodology⁸; the representative of ICPDR on tailings safety management in the Danube River Basin⁹; the UNECE secretariat and the co-Chair from Germany on the projects in Central Asia¹⁰; and the representative of Eco Peace NGO from Armenia on projects in the Caucasian region¹¹.

The UNECE secretariat informed the participants about the upcoming subregional workshop under the UNECE projects on improving mining/tailings safety in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and beyond in Central Asia (20 - 21 November 2019, Almaty, Kazakhstan). The aim of the workshop is to present the final results of the tailings project in Kazakhstan (2018-2019), to share the interim results of the on-going tailings project in Tajikistan (2019-2020), and to

⁷ Further information available at: <http://ecopeace.am/assistance-in-safety-improvement-of-tailings-management-facilities-tmfs-in-armenia-and-georgia/>

⁸ Available at: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45348>

⁹ Further information available at: <https://www.sendaplatform.org/>

¹⁰ Further information available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/areas-of-work/assistance-and-cooperation-programme/envteiaapimplementation/project-to-strengthen-the-safety-of-mining-operations-in-particular-tailings-management-facilities-tmfs-in-tajikistan-and-central-asia.html>

¹¹ Further information can be found in the presentation by the representative of Eco Peace at the UNECE Seminar on accidental transboundary water pollution prevention – contingency planning, early warning, mitigation, available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2019/TEIA/JEG/Session_I_-_4_-_Application_of_the_UNECE_Checklist_for_Transboundary_Contingency_Planning_in_Armenia_-_Eco_Peace.pdf

exchange experiences with other Central Asian countries. Information about the workshop can be found on the webpage¹².

The following key decisions were taken:

- The secretariat will share the draft international tailings standard with the JEG, prepared under the [Global Tailings Review](#)¹³, once it is available, for their review and feedback
- The methodology for the Checklist for TMF safety is proposed to be developed further (e.g. to incorporate issues relating to land use planning and other risk aspects) and applied at a facility in Kyrgyzstan (in cooperation with the regional authorities in Kazakhstan) around summer in 2020/2021, and an Advisory Board is planned to be established for this activity, including risk experts and JEG experts. The JEG co-Chair from Germany will report back to the JEG on the results.

5. Publishing of JEG guidance materials and promotional materials

The participants welcomed the recent publishing of materials developed under the JEG, namely the Safety guidelines and good practices on the management and retention of firefighting water publication, the Brochure on the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, and the four postcards on JEG guidance materials, and agreed to promote and distribute these materials in their respective countries and the relevant authorities and river commissions. Strategies for promoting the materials include distributions via email and at meetings and events, and by posting them on their organizations' webpages.

6. Report on events relating to the JEG in 2018

The participants welcomed the information provided by the JEG co-Chairs on the implementation of activities at the meetings of the governing bodies of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions in October and December 2018, respectively, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the JEG.

7. Implementation of the JEG workplan for 2019-2020

The participants discussed the implementation of the JEG workplan for 2019-2020 and the secretariat called for nominations for lead parties/resources for the following activities:

- Disseminate, test and facilitate the application of the UNECE Safety guidelines and good practices on the management and retention of firefighting water
- Support the implementation of UNECE safety guidelines and checklists in countries with economies in transition and interested United Nations Member States beyond the UNECE region (e.g. by promoting these guidance materials at workshops and training events organized by the JEG, River Basin Commissions and other bodies, or providing support to the implementation of ongoing and possible future projects relating to accidental water pollution prevention)

¹² Available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/meetings-and-events/industrial-accidents/assistance-and-cooperation-programme/2019/subregional-workshop-under-the-unece-projects-on-improving-miningtailings-safety-in-kazakhstan-tajikistan-and-beyond-in-central-asia/docs.html>

¹³ An initiative by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI).

- Promote / organize transboundary response exercises (e.g. by participating in and facilitating workshops, seminars or webinars on lessons learned from such exercises, relevant international forums and conferences).

No proposals were made by JEG members at the meeting. The participants were invited to contact the UNECE secretariat and JEG co-Chairs in the coming weeks with proposals to take the lead on specific activities under the current workplan.

The participants agreed to promote and distribute the materials developed by the JEG in their respective countries and to the relevant authorities and river commissions, including at meetings and events, and on their organizations' webpages.

The JEG member from Belarus informed the participants of a planned project on improving the safety of pipelines and accidental water pollution prevention in Belarus. As part of this project, a joint exercise is proposed to be undertaken in cooperation with Latvia, Poland and the relevant river basin commissions between these countries. She agreed to provide updates to the JEG on the planning of this project, once further progress has been made.

8. Planning for future JEG activities and meetings

The JEG co-Chairs reported on the outcome of recent discussions held by the Bureaux of the Industrial Accidents and Water Conventions regarding the future organization of JEG activities and informed the participants that the future meetings of the JEG, serviced by the UNECE secretariat, will be held once per biennium (i.e. every two years). The meetings will be held in Geneva, unless another country wishes to host and bear the respective costs, including for the attendance and servicing by the secretariat. Taking into account that the next Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention will be 2020, and that a JEG meeting was held towards the end of 2019, it was agreed that the next meeting of the JEG would be held in 2021 or 2022. The participants were also informed that future meetings of any subsidiary expert group of the JEG can be organized by the lead parties, as part of the Conventions' workplans approved by the governing bodies (should such groups be part of the workplans), normally without the participation of the secretariat. If the involvement of the secretariat in the activity is desired, the corresponding funding for this must be made available by the lead parties.

When discussing the call for nominations for members of the JEG that will be launched in 2020, the representative of the Scheldt Commission informed the JEG that there is a possibility to nominate a representative of the Commission to be a member of the JEG. When the call is launched in 2020, the secretariat and JEG co-Chairs will also invite the other river commissions to nominate an expert.

The JEG Co-chair from Germany reported that the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention agreed to hold, as part of the eleventh Conference of the Parties (Bonn, Germany, 1–3 December 2020), a seminar on the safety of tailings management facilities. A small group, comprising, among others, the JEG co-Chair from Germany, was established to organize the seminar substantively. The participants welcomed the organization of the seminar and the involvement of the JEG co-Chair in the substantive preparations. Mr. Winkelmann-Oei agreed to provide further information to the JEG about the seminar, once available.

The participants also welcomed the information provided by Germany on a proposal to develop a new Checklist for the Safety of Pipelines, based on the UNECE Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines¹⁴. The JEG member from Belarus suggested that such a checklist could be tested as part of a joint exercise under the planned project on the safety of pipelines in Belarus (refer to item 7. above). The co-Chair from Germany will further develop this proposal and report back to the JEG with further information once available. He will also share respective information with the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention - and the Co-Chair from Hungary likewise with the Bureau of the Water Convention - to propose inclusion of this activity in the Conventions' future workplans.

The participants agreed to strengthen cooperation between the JEG, UNECE and the river basin commissions, as outlined in item 3. above.

9. Any other business

No other business was raised.

10. Wrap-up and closure of the meeting

The co-Chairs summarized some of the key decisions, and thanked the secretariat, the JEG members and the representatives of the river commissions for their active participation, before closing the meeting at 6 p.m.

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41068>

Annex – List of participants

JEG co-Chairs and UNECE secretariat:

1. Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (JEG co-Chair, Germany)
2. Mr. Peter Kovacs (JEG co-Chair, Hungary)
3. Ms. Rebecca Wardle (UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention)

JEG members:

4. Mr. Bojan Srdic (Serbia)
5. Mr. Claes-Hakan Carlsson (Sweden)
6. Ms. Lubov Hertman (Belarus)
7. Mr. Prof. Pavel Danihelka (Czechia)
8. Mr. Vitalii Mutaf (Republic of Moldova)

National representatives:

9. Ms. Ljupka Dimoska Zajkov (Republic of North Macedonia)
10. Mr. Septimius Mara (Romania)

Representatives of international river commissions and NGOs:

11. Ms. Kristine Sahakyan (EcoPeace, Armenia)
12. Mr. Leon Dhaene (International Scheldt Commission)
13. Ms. Iryna Nikolaieva (Ecoplatform LLC, on behalf of the Dniester Commission)
14. Dr. Premysl Soldan (International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River)
15. Ms. Oleksandra Lohunova (International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine)
16. Mr. Samo Grošelj (International Sava River Basin Commission)