

Project on improving Hazard and Crisis Management in the Danube Delta (Danube Delta project)

Final Workshop of the Project on hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta Region, involving the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine (Bucharest, Romania, 20 - 21 October 2015)

Introduction

The objectives of the final workshop were to present the ongoing efforts to enhance technological hazard management in the Danube Delta Region, to highlight the background, important milestones and the implementation approach for the project, to showcase the results, challenges and lessons learned and to identify the next steps and the way forward. The final workshop also provided, in the framework of its High-level segment, for the signature of the Trilateral Declaration of Intent on cooperation related to industrial pollution crises and hazard management by the Ministers of Environment of Romania and the Republic of Moldova and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Romania. The final workshop was financially supported by Germany. Romania provided valuable in-kind contributions in addition to the organization of the workshop by Terra III Millennium Foundation.



Participants in final workshop were representatives of the national competent authorities from the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine as well as industry representatives, project partners from other international organizations, international experts, representatives of the

donor countries, European Commission and the UNECE secretariat.

Hazard management segment of the final workshop of the Danube Delta Project

During the hazard management segment of the final workshop, the participants discussed the lessons learned from several industrial accidents with dangerous substances – such as the Baia Mare technological accident involving a mining tailings facility in 2000 and the recent Tianjin industrial park disaster in 2015 – and recalled the background to the Danube Delta Project and its important milestones. The participants also discussed the main deliverables in the area of hazard management, such as the comparative analysis of the legal framework of the three countries, the hazard map of the hazardous activities in the Danube Delta and the Safety guidelines and good industry practices for oil terminals.

Another topic of discussion was the training of inspectors during the joint visits of oil terminals in the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine and within the Hazard and Crisis Management week, in particular the use of checklists for inspections. The participants also discussed how to further improve hazard management in the Danube Delta Region.

Crisis management segment of the final workshop of the Danube Delta Project

During the crisis management segment of the final workshop, the participants discussed the main deliverables and outcomes in the area of crisis management, such as the draft Joint contingency plan for the Danube Delta, the table-top and field emergency response exercises and the evaluation of the field exercise. At the end of the session the participants also discussed how to improve the crisis management in the Danube Delta Region.

The participants recognized the importance of the crisis management component of the project as a driving force to improved coordination and cooperation between the emergency situations authorities of the three countries. They also highlighted the experience gained and the lessons learned from the workshops and emergency exercises organized and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to benefit from sharing experience and good practices in the area of civil protection and emergency response. One of the national coordinators for Romania outlined the way forward for the finalization and approval of the Joint contingency plan for the Danube Delta Region.

The participants also received information on good practices for cross-border cooperation in international river basins (experience from Germany in the basins of Rhine and Elbe rivers) and on the cooperation on crisis management between the EU and its neighbourhood countries.

The crisis management segment of the final project workshop was supported through an additional financial contribution by Germany, which allowed for the finalization of the project in line with the agreed implementation plan.

High-level segment of the final workshop of the Danube Delta Project

During the High-level segment of the workshop, the participants received information and discussed the progress, challenges, lessons learned and the way forward for Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. They have adopted the conclusions for the final workshop, recognizing the achievements under the Danube Delta project and expressing their desire to build on the project outcomes to further strengthen hazard and crisis management through cooperation along the Danube Delta Region. The High-level segment provided the platform for the signature of the Trilateral Declaration of Intent on cooperation related to industrial pollution crises and hazard management by the Ministers of Environment of Romania and the Republic of Moldova and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Romania. The Acting Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine welcomed, through a letter read out by a representative from the Ukrainian Embassy, the activities conducted in the framework of the Project, appreciating their contribution to enhancing hazard and crisis management and expressing interest in furthering the bilateral and multilateral cooperation on preventing and responding to accidental pollution crises in the Danube Delta and the Lower Prut. It is expected that Ukraine will sign the declaration at a later date in 2016. The Declaration will enter into force upon signature of the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The main conclusions of the final workshop were:

The Danube Delta project has achieved many positive results, as follows:

I. In the area of both hazard and crisis management:

- ▶ Enhanced cooperation on hazard and crisis management between competent authorities and operators of major industrial facilities in the Danube Delta Region.
- ▶ Improved understanding of the existing legal and regulatory framework for hazard and crisis management.
- ▶ Identification of areas for improvement and priority actions through a comparative analysis of regulatory frameworks, providing the basis for enhancing and harmonizing those frameworks.

- ▶ Preparation of a draft trilateral agreement on cooperation related to industrial pollution crisis and hazard management in the Danube Delta region.
- ▶ Negotiation of a Declaration of Intention “Towards Improved Hazard and Crisis Management in the Danube Delta Region”, to be signed by the Ministers of Environment of the Republic of Moldova and Romania and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Romania during the final workshop of the UNECE Danube Delta project*.
- ▶ Increased public awareness about the importance of hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta Region through contacts with the media and the publishing of relevant information through the United Nations news channels.

II. In the area of hazard management:

- ▶ Improved awareness of national approaches and international good practices in hazard management, acquired during the technical workshop on hazard management (Chisinau, 12–13 July 2011) and the hazard management segment of the hazard and crisis management week (Chisinau, 23–26 March 2015), which provide the basis for the development of action plans for improving hazard management.
- ▶ Training of inspectors in enforcing safety, through joint visits that took place in Galati, Romania and Giurgiulesti, Republic of Moldova (27–29 September 2011) and in Odessa, Ukraine (24 September 2013).

III. In the area of crisis management:

- ▶ Enhanced knowledge and information exchange on national procedures for contingency planning and response to industrial accidents with transboundary effects during a technical workshop on crisis management (Chisinau, 13–14 December 2011) and the crisis management segment of the hazard and crisis management week (Chisinau, 23–26 March 2015).
- ▶ Identification of areas for closer cooperation for preventive measures (i.e. identification and notification of hazardous activities, common inspections, risk analysis), in case of an emergency (i.e., warning, notification and response actions) and for coordinated action when requesting and receiving assistance, in particular in the event of a major oil spill in the Danube Delta Region.
- ▶ Review of the compatibility of off-site emergency plans and development of the first draft trilateral joint contingency plan for the Danube Delta Region, tested and subsequently improved during table-top and field exercises in March and September 2015, between the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, with a special attention to the risk sites, including oil terminals and future prospects for industrial parks
- ▶ Improved response capacities through the conduct of the first trilateral field exercise in the Danube Delta Region (Giurgiulesti, 1–3 September 2015) and subsequent preparation of an evaluation report with findings and

recommendations for improvements, serving as a basis for the drafting of action plans for the improvement of crisis management.

IV. International commitments

The project supported the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in implementing existing international commitments and making progress towards future ones, notably by:

- ▶ Strengthening the implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, to which the three countries are Parties, notably with regard to the prevention of accidents and contingency planning.
- ▶ Strengthening the implementation of the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube with regard to regional cooperation on transboundary water management, including the handling of substances hazardous to water and warning and alarming procedures testing.
- ▶ Supporting the implementation of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents with regard to joint contingency planning, preparedness, response and mutual assistance, and the commitments set out in the High-level commitment declaration on the Convention's Assistance Programme adopted by the three countries in 2005.
- ▶ Supporting the implementation of other relevant instruments, including those of the European Union.
- ▶ Facilitating progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

V. The way forward

- ▶ Maintain political momentum towards the signing of the high-level Declaration of Intent "Towards Strengthening Hazard and Crisis Management" by Ukraine in 2015.
- ▶ Finalize the draft Joint contingency plan for the Danube Delta by the end of 2016.
- ▶ Negotiate the update by the end of 2017 the Agreement on cooperation in the Danube Delta and the Lower River Prut nature protected areas between the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Romania, signed in June 2000, in order to include provisions specifically aimed at the prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents with transboundary effects.