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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE



Ministry for the Environment  
Land and Sea

TEIA/Danube project/2

ICARO

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

**Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy**

**Project under the Assistance Programme**

**Project for Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia  
on joint management of transboundary emergencies  
from spills of hazardous substance into the Danube River**

**Bucharest, 17-18 March 2009**

### **Minutes of the Kick-off meeting**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The kick-off meeting for the project for partner countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia on joint management to emergencies from spills of hazardous substances into the Danube River was organized in Bucharest on 17-18 March 2009. The meeting was hosted jointly by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations within the Ministry of Administration and Interior of Romania.
2. The kick-off meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Emergency Situations from Bulgaria, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations from Romania as well as the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning from Serbia. Experts from the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy, as well as from ICARO (Italian advisory company on prevention and preparedness aspects) and the representatives of the secretariat also participated to the meeting. The list of the meeting's participants is annexed to these minutes.
3. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of the project, and in particular the three suggested project phases (technical workshop, in-field exercise and final workshop)<sup>1</sup> so that optimal involvement of each project country could be achieved leading to reaching most effectively the overall project goal - strengthening the effectiveness in organizing emergency

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<sup>1</sup> The concept for the project defined four phases (a) kick-off meeting to initiate the project and agree on countries involvement; (b) technical workshop to discuss current organization of crisis management in the project countries, analyze the experience and good practice from other countries and to prepare for an in-field exercise by agreeing on general scenario for it; (c) in-field exercise to test the current crisis management procedures and through it collect data for analysis and (d) workshop to discuss the results of the project, and in particular the analysis of data collected during the exercise.

preparedness through further optimizing the emergency procedures especially in view of the cooperation in a transboundary context.

## **II. Project phases**

4. The representatives of the partner countries held an interesting discussion on the implementation of the project and its suggested phases and agreed to:

(a) hold a technical workshop, preferably in the week of 15 June 2009. The workshop should be attended by experts representing all authorities at national level from each of the partner countries involved into emergencies affecting water, and representatives of local level authorities from the border region in which the exercise is to be performed. The total number of representatives from each country should preferably not exceed 10. The workshop should then be attended by experts to take the role of independent evaluators for the exercise. The agreed conduct of the workshop is described in the section “technical workshop”

(b) perform the in-field exercise in the second half of September 2009, consisting of one day exercise, and one day workshop for brief review and discussion of the exercise results and to give the basis for more detailed analysis. The exercise would be conducted according to the scenario, which draft is to be prepared following the kick-off meeting and is to be elaborated during the technical workshop. Two options for scenario were discussed by partner countries and are described in the section “options for scenario”. A consultation meeting should be organized about three weeks prior to the exercise to review the preparations and address any problems if needed. This consultation meeting should be held preferably in the region of the exercise.

(c) hold the final workshop in the period between the end of October and the beginning of November 2009. The workshop should be attended by representatives of project leading authorities of each of the partner countries and the evaluators and to discuss the results of the analysis and agree on the project recommendations and the follow-up work. This final workshop should be open for observers from other countries, especially from the South Eastern European region, in order to share the experience and the knowledge obtained through the project.

(d) share equally the organization of the project activities so that each country would be responsible for arranging one of the phases, when needed with support from Italian experts or the secretariat. The proposal on sharing the responsibilities is contained in section “options for scenario”.

5. The representatives of the secretariat and Italy informed the project countries on the possibility for them to receive financial support for arranging the project activities. This can involve a grant to cover expenses related to services needed for the meeting arrangements. It was then agreed that the expenses related to involving local staff of each country into the in-field exercise and use of equipment – mainly driving of emergency response cars or similar would need to be provided by each partner country as in-kind contribution to the project.

### III. Options for scenario

6. The partner countries discussed about different kinds of scenarios to be possibly used for the project and agreed that:

(a) A fictive scenario would require preparations of fictive emergency plans, and establishing procedures and adequate training for them, instead of rather testing the plans and procedures which are already in place for existing industrial sites. In addition, in case the emergency plans do not exist or exist partly, the elaborated scenario, and the conducted analysis could be at least a good basis for developing the plans or procedures and thus the project could bring an additional benefit. For these reasons the fictive scenario was not appreciated.

(b) A scenario for dealing with release of dangerous substance from other source than industrial site would rather require application of procedures other than those arising from the Convention and therefore should be avoided.

(c) A realistic scenario that is for an existing industrial site and involving a release of substances dangerous for water and with a potential of causing transboundary effects in the partner countries through the Danube River would allow exercising on application of procedures arising from the Convention and may either allow improving existing plans or contributing to elaborate new ones. The realistic scenario was therefore considered as most favorable to be used in the project.

7. Taking into account the preferable scenario for the use in the project, and having considered the industrial sites present in all three partner countries handling substances dangerous for water and capable of causing transboundary effects through Danube River, it was agreed that the optimal case would be a petroleum storage in Prahovo in Serbia, with a location close to the bank of the Danube River only a few kilometers upstream from the border from Romania and Bulgaria.

8. The Prahovo petroleum storage was identified as the only site capable of causing possible emergency with effects on the two other partner countries thus would require cooperation of all of them. To this end, project coordinators from Serbia, who were not in a position to decide at the kick-off meeting on the Prahovo site, were requested to explore whether there is a general agreement in the country to use it for the project. At the same time the secretariat was requested to support the Serbian coordinators if needed with ensuring the needed agreement.

9. The partner countries agreed that representatives of Serbia should confirm by 10 April at the latest whether the agreement for Prahovo site is granted. Furthermore they agreed that for Prahovo – considered as *OPTION-I* there would be following sharing of responsibilities for the project phases:

(a) technical workshop is to be organized by Romania and preferably in the region bordering Serbia and Bulgaria;

(b) in-field exercise is to be initiated by Serbia in Prahovo and the one day back to back workshop would be organized at Prahovo/Negotin. Also the consultation meeting to be held about three weeks prior to the exercise is to be organized in the same region;

(c) final workshop is to be hosted by Bulgaria.

10. Should for any reason the Prahovo site not be used for the purpose of the project, the partner countries agreed that the exercise involving substance dangerous for water would be initiated in Romania, however since there is no industrial site handling such substance with location that could cause effects on the Danube River and through it on Serbia, therefore the exercise would be organized between Romania and Bulgaria and Serbia would participate to it only as observer. Considering this as *OPTION II* the countries agreed that for the responsibility for the project phases Romania and Serbia swap their roles as listed in paragraph 9.

#### **IV. Technical workshop**

11. The partner countries agreed that the technical workshop should give them the opportunity to well prepare for the in-field exercise. To this end they agreed first of all to inform each other on their own emergency procedures in order to have clear understanding on existing differences.

12. The ICARO expert was requested to elaborate a guide for preparing the presentations so that each of the countries would tackle the same issues falling under (a) monitoring, notification and requests for assistance, (b) emergency management (from the moment of pollution until restoration and clean-up), and (c) sampling and modeling.

13. It was foreseen to accommodate time for group work, following the presentations, on discussing the procedures so to ensure full understanding on how the emergencies and all the aspects falling into it are handled by each of the partner country. Such a work in groups would be followed by brief reporting in plenum on the discussions held.

14. The partner countries indicated that work in groups would be only possible to conduct if a majority of countries' experts would have sufficient knowledge of English language to communicate in it freely, as otherwise the group work may be too difficult logistically when it would be needed to ensure interpretation for each of the groups. To this end partner countries agreed to report by 10 April 2009 on their representatives to the technical workshop and their knowledge of English language.

15. Following the session focused on exchange of emergency procedure, the second session should focus on preparations for the in-field exercise, starting with presentation of the scenario to be used for it and continuing possibly with work in groups to elaborate particular modules of the scenario as well as the preparations to be conducted prior to the exercise. The ICARO expert was requested to develop the draft scenario and include it in the guide for presentations.

16. The partner countries agreed that the scenario as elaborated in the workshop should be complemented by additional changing weather/conditions scenarios to be developed by the exercise evaluators and which would be only shared with the partner countries during the exercise. This would be done with the understanding that these scenarios would not go beyond the agreed scope of the

exercise according to the jointly elaborated general scenario that is e.g. would not require activation of other services than those agreed prior to the exercise.

17. For the effective running of the project the partner countries were requested to meet the deadlines agreed during the kick-off meeting and were encouraged to contact ICARO, Italian Ministry of Environment or the secretariat if any assistance would be needed at any stage of the preparations.

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