UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents

Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System
Task force
17 September 2009

SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE TASK FORCE MEETING
By the secretariat

I.   Introduction

1.   At a request of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, 15th meeting, The Hague, 26-27 January 2009, secretariat invited points of contact within the UNECE Industrial Accidents Notification (IAN) System to nominate their representatives to join a task force with following tasks: (a) ensure a number of analytical exercises to be carried out before the fourth consultation of points of contact, (b) ensure the results of these exercises to be presented for analysis at the fourth consultation to allow the points of contact making further recommendations on strengthening the effectiveness of the IAN System, and (c) facilitate to the points of contact to make the evaluation of the compatibility of IAN and EU CECIS Systems and verify if there is no redundancy between the two systems and submit results and possible recommendations in this regard.

2.   Points of contact from Austria, Croatia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland nominated their representatives to the task force.

3.   The first task force meeting was held in Geneva on 17 September 2009. Following task force members took part in the meeting: Mr. Barjan Bajt (Croatia), Mr. Eric Philip (France), Mr. Stefano Smanioto (Italy), Mr. Ruud de Krom (the Netherlands), Mr. Francisc Senzaconi (Romania) and Mr. Dominiqure Rauber (Switzerland). Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski and Ms. Virginia Fuse representing the secretariat also participated to the meeting. Mr. Christian Krol (Austria) due to other obligations could not attend the meeting.

II.   Analytical exercises

4.   Mr. Bajt informed the task force about an analytical exercise organized on 10 June 2009 by Croatia with its neighbour Slovenia. The exercise was carried out in accordance with the guidance for analytical exercises of 20 November 2008 and was based on a fictitious scenario. It allowed the

Croatian point of contact practicing the IAN System procedure, identifying shortcoming and on that basis concluding on how to improve internally the System's operation.

5.   Mr Bajt also reported that the web-based application was appreciated and considered as a great step forward compared to notification procedure based on faxes. At the same time a number of shortages were recognized such as:

- no response possibility that could be recorded through any of the forms,
- changes of chemicals from form to form require a time consuming procedure,
- the box for describing the chemical substance is too small and is difficult to use for long names including formulas, or
- no possibility to send short messages without completing any of the forms

6.   Mr. Rauber informed about the exercise carried out by Switzerland with notification to Germany and France. He informed that the exercise was not too successful for practicing cross-border notification due to the fact that the effects were only in a limited way transboundary. Nevertheless, it allowed to identify that the information flow from local level, managing the response actions, to the national level, responsible for international notification under IAN System, is only limited what causes difficulties for carrying out the relevant IAN notification.

7.   Mr. Rauber also listed some ideas for improvements in the IAN web-based application such as: (a) the notification e-mail message should be much clearer and without any abbreviation so that duty officer within points of contact could identify without any doubt where the information is coming from, even if not operating IAN System on a daily basis (b) restricted mode should be also available for exercises, or (c) instead of word "public" that is misleading for notification within points of contact an expression "for authority use only" should be applied.

8.   Mr. Senzaconi and Mr. Wyrowski informed that a test of IAN would be conducted during an in-field exercise organized under the Assistance Programme project for Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia on Danube River on 24 September 2009, of which results should also be shared during the next consultation of points of contact.

9.   The task force discussed the exercises as reported and agreed that:

(a)   those ideas for improvements to the IAN web-based application that only require changing records in the databases (changing used expressions or changing the e-mail notification message) should be implemented by the secretariat as soon as possible;

(b)   the improvements that would require substantial changes to the application code and would also require implementing amendments to the IAN System (e.g. recording replies especially on assistance, short message information even before early warning) should be presented for discussion at the next consultation of points of contact so that upon agreement the points of contact could make recommendations for decisions at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (autumn 2010);

`

    (c)   analytical exercises give valuable results to the exercising countries for further improving their notification procedures, therefore they should be organized periodically between neighbouring countries. To this end it should be discussed at the next consultation of points of contact if such exercises should be introduced as compulsory at least once a year and if an exercising and testing policy should be elaborated.

III.   Evaluation of compatibility of IAN and EU CECIS systems

10.   The task force held an interesting discussion regarding different notification systems that were developed (a) under various international agreements among others apart from IAN and EU CECIS, also the systems used by River Commission (e.g. ICPDR PIAC), or for nuclear accidents and radiological emergencies (e.g. ENAC system of the IAEA or the European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange System ECURIE) and (b) for national purposes, e.g. in the Netherlands (Infraweb, ICAWEB).

11.   The task force drew following conclusions from its discussion:

    (a)   Each system is best adapted for its purpose what proves its usefulness. At the same time there are too many systems in operation which in a number of situations may be required to be used concurrently (e.g. EU member state, Party to the Convention and to the Danube Convention, in case of accident at the Danube River causing transboundary effects shall use systems under each agreement);

    (b)   The solution is not to eliminate any of the existing systems but to find a way to exchange relevant information between systems to be used during the same emergency, so that the notification is available with each relevant system whereas the data is inserted with one system only;

    (c)   Such exchange of information between systems should then eliminate the problem of sending same information through different systems, if they are operated by different authorities;

    (d)   The practices under implementation, both internationally e.g. within IAEA (standardization of data format) or national e.g. Dutch developments (standardization and development of a connecter between national systems), should be considered by the consultation of points of contact so that relevant recommendations could be made to the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

12.   The task force agreed based on the conclusions that it would prepare a session during the next consultation devoted to discussion on how to make different notification systems coexisting together rather than to make comparison of IAN and EU CECIS systems.

IV. Fourth consultation of points of contact

13. The task force agreed that the fourth consultation of point of contact should last 2 full days and should be held in either of the two periods 22-31 March or 12-16 April 2010.

14. Mr. Marjan Bajt, as representative of Croatia that kindly offered hosting the consultation, was requested to identify 2 days within the above-specified periods that are most suitable for the host country and communicate them to the secretariat. These days should be then announced by the secretariat, preferably by the end of October 2009, to all points of contact.

15. Regarding the programme, it was agreed that the consultation should start with a session devoted to the effectiveness of IAN System. Such a session should comprise presentations on the analytical exercises and allow fruitful discussion on the conclusions and recommendations derived from the exercises. It should also lead to agreeing on the exercising and testing policy.

16. In order to ensure that each participant representing his/her country's point of contact would be able to take active part in the discussions, secretariat was requested to include in the message announcing the date of the consultation an invitation to carry out a communication test with one of the neighbours in order to be up-to-date with the operation of the system, its forms and procedures.

17. The task force also considered to organize the discussion in session I as work in groups. To this end, Mr. Bajt was requested to explore, if from the organizational point of view, the work in groups would be possible to arrange.

18. The session II, as agreed (see para. 12), should focus on the future use of different systems for notification so that effective use is ensured and no problems of redundancy arise.

19. The task force agreed that the session II should start with a presentation introducing the problem. One of the task force members could make such a presentation. It then should be followed by the presentations showing good practices in this area. Mr. Gerhard de Vries from the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission was recommended to make a presentation on standardization being developed by the IAEA together with competent authorities and international organisations and introduce a network concept[1]. Thereafter Mr. de Krom would show the Dutch developments leading to establishing of central data warehouse as a different national systems' connecter.

20. The presentations should be followed by a plenary discussion. Mr. de Krom agreed to moderate it.

21. The task force investigated also other hot topics that should be included in the programme of the consultation. As such the issue of early warning notification of non-validated data and resulting from it possible claims for damage was considered.

---

[1] Mr. de Krom agreed to contact Mr. Vries and check his availability

`

22.   The task force was not able to conclude whether any attention should be devoted to this topic. The secretariat was therefore requested to add to the message announcing the date of the fourth consultation a question to points of contact whether they are interested in the detailed discussion/sharing of experience in this topic. It was agreed that the replies received should be considered at the latest at next meeting of the task force.

23.   Considered was also a course/training on use of IAN web-based application. The task force decided that such an opportunity would be beneficial if it constituted a questions and answers session to the functions/procedure in the application. The secretariat was requested to investigate with the points of contact their interests in such a course/training.

V.   **Closing and final agreements**

24.   The task force agreed that it will communicate by electronic means to discuss the responses received from the points of contact concerning their interests in hot topics to be tackled during the fourth consultations, and to the extend possible, decide on adding another session to the consultation programme.

25.   The task force also agreed that it will meet on 14 January 2010 to finalize the preparations and programme (reviewing time slots set for presentations and discussions) for the fourth consultation. Secretariat was requested to prepare a draft programme based on decisions made in this meeting and on the communication to follow.

26.   Mr. de Krom offered to host the second meeting in the Netherlands and to combine it with the presentation on the data-warehouse/connecter that should be implemented in the Netherlands by end of 2009. The task force welcomed this invitation.

27.   The meeting was closed.