

Building safer homes in safer places: approaches to preventing risks from industrial sites to housing and land

Seminar concept paper and draft agenda – *version 050313*

Place: Palais des Nations, Room tbc (one of the rooms close to Room XIX)

Date and time: 23 April 2013, time tbc (tentatively 14.00 – 15.30)

Language: English

Introduction

Natural and human-generated disasters have resulted in large-scale damage to housing across the UNECE region and present important challenges to the work of governments. They call for common efforts of member States to develop disaster risk prevention measures through building safer houses in safer places, thus contributing to the global implementation of the UNISDR Hyugo Framework for Action¹, the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and, as appropriate, the EU "Seveso Directive" - the Directive on the control of major-accident hazards - as well as to the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

The seminar is organized under the umbrella of the Europe-Central Asia Housing Forum "Promoting Sustainable Housing Futures for All", which will take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 22–24 April 2013. This event is a follow-up event to the seminar on land use planning around hazardous industrial sites² organized by the the Conference of the Parties on the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) in November 2010. The seminar participants concluded that safety aspects were not well integrated into land-use planning due to the lack of the communication and cooperation between safety experts, planners and other main stakeholders. It was also outlined that although international guidelines on safety and land exist³, they are not sufficiently reflected in national legislation and regulations of most of the UNECE member States.

The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management is currently developing a Strategy and Targets for sustainable housing and land management in the UNECE region for the period 2014 – 2020. The draft Strategy presents the vision, objectives, targets and activities for the period until 2020 with the aim of promoting green and inclusive growth of human settlements and the long-term sustainability of the housing and land management sectors in the UNECE region. After the Strategy is adopted by the member States at the Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management on 8 October 2013, it will further strengthen the future implementation of the existing UNECE housing and land management guidelines, policy recommendations, action plans and other documents.

The seminar objectives

This seminar will be aimed to discuss the following questions:

- Which targets could be established in the draft Strategy that would support efforts of the governments to prevent the risks to the population from industrial sites?
- Which international rules and recommendations on safety and land use should be considered while developing and implementing policies and planning practices at the national level in the ECE countries? How they should be incorporated in the national legislations?

¹ [UNISDR, Hyugo Framework for Action - Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters](http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf)
http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf

² The seminar materials are available at http://www.unece.org/env/teia/cop_c9.html

³ Please see <http://mahb.jrc.ec.europa.eu>, <http://eMARS.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

- What concrete actions need to be taken by the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, the Conference of the Parties on the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, national authorities and stakeholders to promote implementation of the existing guidelines on safety and land use planning in the UNECE member States?

The seminar expected outcomes

The seminar will contribute to the discussion of the content of the draft Strategy on sustainable housing and land management in the parts of promoting environmental safe housing through stricter housing and land-use planning regulations, which take into account potential risks from human-generated disasters, including industrial accidents and hazardous industrial sites. It is also expected that as an outcome of the discussions, the seminar participants will elaborate concrete proposals for possible follow-up activities such as the preparation of publication(s) and organization of capacity-building activities.

Draft seminar agenda

Chair: Mr. Bernard Gay, Head of Section on Prevention of Major Accident and Earthquake Mitigation, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland; and member of the Bureau of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

14:00 - 14:15 Introductory statement by the Chair: including information on the outcomes of the November 2010 seminar and this seminar's objectives and expected outcomes

14:15 - 14:25 UNECE Strategy and Targets 2014 – 2020 on sustainable housing and land management: overall information; targets and objectives for environmentally safe housing through stricter housing and land use planning regulations – *Gulnara Roll, Secretary, UNECE Committee for Housing and Land Management*

14:25 - 14:45 Provisions of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the EU "Seveso Directive" on safety and land use - *Ms. Katrien Debeuckelaere, Legal Advisor, Department of Legal and Policy Development, Spatial Planning for Flanders Region, Belgium*

14:45 – 15:00 Implementation of provisions to reduce risks from industrial pollution in spatial planning and housing - *Azer Khanlarov, Deputy Director, Research and Design Institute, Ministry of Emergency of Azerbaijan; and member of the CHLM Bureau*

15:00 – 15:15 Questions and comments

15:15 – 15:25 Proposals for follow-up activities to the seminar – *Nicholas Bonvoisin, Secretary, Industrial Accidents Convention*

15:25 – 15:30 Wrap-up by the Chair