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## **UKRAINE ACCEDES TO AGREEMENT ON THE CARRIAGE OF DANGEROUS GOODS BY INLAND WATERWAYS**

On 28 January 2010 Ukraine acceded to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), bringing the number of Contracting Parties to thirteen.

In a ceremony at the Palais des Nations, Deputy Minister and Head of the State Administration of Maritime and Inland Water Transport of Ukraine, Mr. Mykhailo Chubai, handed over the instrument of accession to the Executive Secretary of UNECE, Mr. Ján Kubiš.

The Agreement was done on 26 May 2000 in Geneva at a Diplomatic Conference organized jointly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR). It entered into force on 29 February 2008.

It was established to increase the safety of international carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterways and prevent pollution resulting from accidents or incidents during such carriage, whilst facilitating international transport and trade.

The ADN includes a number of annexed Regulations. These contain technical requirements for the international carriage of dangerous substances and articles in packages and in bulk on board inland navigation vessels and tank vessels, as well as uniform provisions concerning the construction and operation of such vessels. They also establish international requirements and procedures for inspections, issuance of certificates of approval, recognition of classification societies, monitoring, and training and examination of experts. □



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## **UNECE AND UN-HABITAT DELIVERING AS ONE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES**



In countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), affordable housing has yet to become a reality. The region lacks a social rental housing market and its multifamily housing stock needs urgent restructuring. There is the additional problem of buildings that have become uninhabitable as the result of natural disasters like earthquakes.

UNECE's Country Profiles on the housing sector, performed in several CIS countries over the last years, have highlighted the challenges and the institutional, legislative, financial and technical gaps that need to be bridged to develop affordable, healthy and greener housing.

UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, has also become increasingly active in the region in recent years, in particular through its Project Office in Moscow, which serves as the regional hub for the exchange of information for CIS countries on human settlements and urban planning

For the UN to play an even more effective role in housing in the region, UNECE and UN-Habitat have joined forces and developed a work plan for their activities in the CIS region, which they will deliver more effectively through UN-Habitat's Moscow office.

This plan was formalised in the form of a Letter of Agreement signed in St. Petersburg on 26 January 2010. It includes joint action on capacity-building workshops, communication and fundraising activities as well as a joint training course on affordable housing for CIS countries.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) will bring its assistance and expertise in developing an appropriate training approach and methodology. □

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# ON THE 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF BAIJA MARE, UNECE CALLS FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO PREVENT INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS



On 30 January 2000, in the northern Romanian town of Baia Mare, a mine tailings dam burst releasing over 100,000 cubic metres (the equivalent of 40 Olympic sized swimming pools) of cyanide and heavy metal contaminated water into the Sars, Lapus, Somes and Tisza rivers. After two weeks, the contaminated water reached the Danube and then continued on, eventually reaching the Black Sea.



The contamination caused substantial fish kills along sections of the affected rivers as well as significant disruptions to water supplies. The heavy metal contamination will linger in the environment for many decades after the spill.

The 10th anniversary of this accident is a reminder of the need for vigilance to prevent industrial accidents. Through the

secretariat of its Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention), which entered into force on 19 April 2000, UNECE has been supporting its member countries in their joint work to reduce the likelihood of an industrial accident. The Convention has been ratified by 38 countries plus the European Union.

The Convention has organised various workshops with government departments to highlight legislative options and best practice for improving major hazard prevention across the UNECE region. It established a web-based Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System, which enables countries to notify promptly their neighbours about any industrial accident.

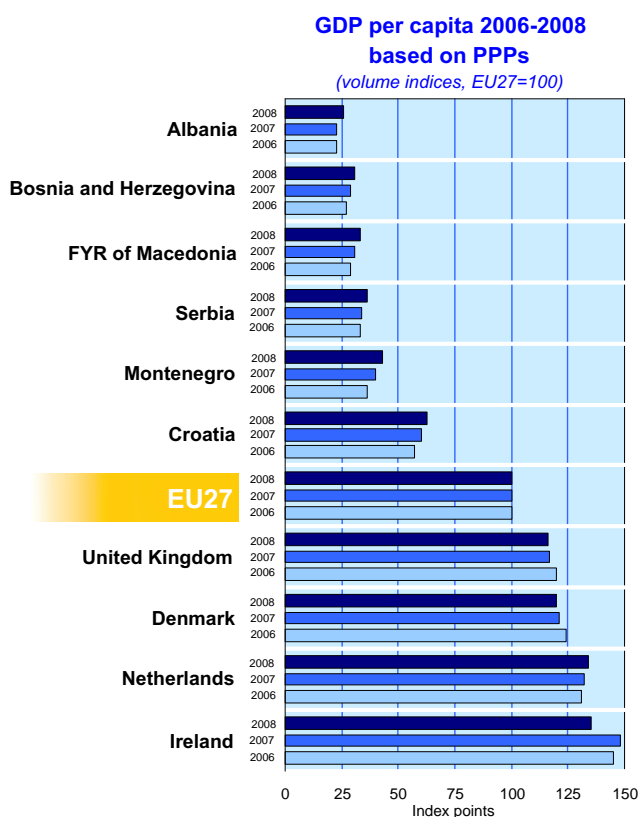
In-field training exercises have also been conducted with local authorities to practice emergency response procedures that will reduce the effects of an industrial accident if one occurs.

Additionally, the Industrial Accidents Convention and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) negotiated with governments and industry the Protocol on Civil Liability.

Almost 10 years after its entry into force, the Industrial Accidents Convention will continue to work with countries across the UNECE region to increase international cooperation in the effort against industrial accidents and their detrimental effects on people and the environment. □

For more information, visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/teia> or contact the secretariat at: [teia@unece.org](mailto:teia@unece.org).

## THE WELFARE GAP BETWEEN THE EU AND WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES NARROWS SLIGHTLY



Source: Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

In the Western Balkan countries the level of economic welfare has risen in relation to the EU27 average during the recent years. However, the gap remains significant. Only in Croatia, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has by 2008 reached more than 60% of the EU27 average in purchasing power parities (PPPs); in Montenegro it was a little over 40%, while in the rest of the Western Balkan countries it was about or below one third of the EU27 average.

The current economic crisis also affected the welfare levels inside the EU block. From 2006 to 2008, only a few earlier best-performing EU countries improved their relative position in regard to the EU27 average in terms of GDP per capita at PPPs. The noticeable setbacks in comparison to the EU27 average were registered in Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, in 2008 Ireland (135 index points) still remained the second country after Luxembourg (276 index points). The Netherlands, with a relative GDP per capita index at 134 points, was virtually at the same position as Ireland.

The GDP levels are compared by converting them with the purchasing power parities (PPPs) that adjust for differences in price levels between countries. Owing to statistical uncertainty smaller differences in the indices are not significant and conclusions should be made with care. □