

Annual Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting on Industrial Accidents

22 September 2020, 14h-17h

*Hosted by International Labour Organization (ILO)
Virtually via Zoom*

Connection details:

**Join Zoom Meeting
<https://ilo-org.zoom.us/j/97179243018>**

Meeting ID: 971 7924 3018

13:50 CET	<i>Participants are invited to connect 10 min earlier to sort out any connection issues in advance and allow for a timely start of the meeting.</i>
14:00-14:15	Welcome and introduction <i>Manal Azzi and Halshka Graczyk, ILO</i>
14:15-15:40	Tour de Table <i>Participating agencies will be invited to briefly highlight the main milestones of their industrial accidents programmes in a 5 minute intervention. All agencies will receive the coordination table in advance of the meeting, containing background of each agency's activities; therefore this should just be a concise summary of key information.</i>
15:40-15:55	Break
15:55-16:25	Discussion on coordination and collaboration <i>Participants will be invited to share proposals for collaboration based on interventions of participating agencies and coordination table shared previously. Participants are encouraged to follow up with specific agencies via follow-up calls and discussions.</i>
16:25-16:35	Presentation of Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, the Joint Research Center and the UNECE on Natech Risk Management <i>Marie-Ange Baucher, OECD</i>
16:35-16:45	Upcoming events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents (October 2020), <i>Marie-Ange Baucher, OECD</i> • 11th CoP of the Industrial Accidents Convention (Bonn, 1-3 Dec 2020), <i>Franziska Hirsch, UNECE</i>
16:45-17:00	Closing of the meeting <i>Manal Azzi and Halshka Graczyk, ILO</i> <i>Wrap up, take away messages, next meeting host</i>

Participants List

	Name	Organisation
1	Manal Azzi	International Labour Organization (ILO)
2	Halshka Graczyk	International Labour Organization (ILO)
3	Lacye Groening	International Labour Organization (ILO)
4	Tijs Koerts	European Process Safety Centre (EPSC)
5	Raquel Duarte Davison	Public Health England, World Health Organization Collaborating Center for the Public health Management of Chemical Exposure
6	David Russell	Public Health England, World Health Organization Collaborating Center for the Public health Management of Chemical Exposure
7	Mark Wells	European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law EMPEL)
8	Marie Ange Baucher	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
9	Bertrand Dagallier	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
10	Franziska Hirsch	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
11	Claudia Kamke	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
12	Max Linsen	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
13	Rohan Perera	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
14	Maureen Wood	European Commission Joint Research Centre
15	Charlotta Benedek	UN Environment/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
16	Irina Zastenskaya	World Health Organization
17	Sandra Averous	United Nations Environment Programme
18	Oliver Wootton	United Nations Institute For Training And Research
19	Marc Gordon	United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction

Meeting minutes

Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by Manal AZZI, Senior Specialist for Occupational Safety and Health at the International Labour Organization (ILO). She welcomed participants and noted that the ILO is honoured to host this important meeting, especially at such a critical time, when the world of work is experiencing a number of shocks, and the question of health and safety becomes ever more critical. The ILO was founded on the principle of guaranteeing protection from hazardous exposures in the world of work, and has a long history in the prevention of industrial accidents, with the view of protecting the health of workers, their families, and their communities around the world.

It was noted that even as technology evolves and the structure of work continues to shift dramatically, major industrial accidents continue to pose a major threat to the safety and health of workers around the world. In the absence of sound chemicals management, appropriate risk assessment and other preventative actions and policies, they may pose a serious and imminent risk for the occurrence of major industrial accidents. Notably, the recent tragedy in Lebanon more than ever highlights the urgent need to work towards preventing industrial catastrophes around the world. This tragedy was entirely preventable, reminding the world that safe chemicals management, including the implementation and oversight of policies both at the national and workplace level are essential to protect the health and safety of workers, their families, and entire communities.

The meeting was moderated by Halshka GRACZYK, Technical Officer for Occupational Safety and Health at the International Labour Organization. She presented updates from the ILO, including the continued global ratification campaign of international labour standards, including the ILO Convention No. 174 on Major Industrial Accidents and accompanying Recommendation (No. 181). In addition, the ILO continues to promote its tools on chemicals management and industrial accidents, including the Code of Practice on Major Industrial Accidents and a number of technical publications on risk assessment and hazard installations. Importantly, the ILO covers a broader portfolio on chemicals, which includes a number of complementary international labour standards, including the ILO's Chemical Convention, No. 170 and many sectoral and hazard specific conventions. The ILO provides guidance and technical advice to its tripartite constituents and stakeholders around the world in order to promote policy frameworks, both at the national and workplace level, for safe chemicals management and major industrial accident prevention.

Tour de table

- Tijs Koerts, EPSC, presented agency updates (See PPT)
- Bertrand Dagallier, OECD, presented agency updates (See PPT)
- Rohan Perera, OPCW, presented agency updates (See PPT). In addition: the workshop on chemical safety and security management for Caribbean and Latin American Countries on 22 October starts at 14:00 hrs. Programme is in English and by using Microsoft Teams. Please send an email if you would like to attend or deliver a presentation: rohan.perera@opcw.org
- Mark Wells, IMPEL presented agency updates, including work related to practical implementation and enforcement of industry related pieces of legislation that pertain to the environment. Resources were discussed that focus on prevention efforts for environmental regulators.

- Franziska Hirsch, Secretary of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, discussed implementation of the Convention and its long term strategy until 2030, which is aligned with and supports the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals. She noted that the Industrial Accidents Convention supports countries in addressing NaTech risk management and accident prevention, among other things through the implementation of related workshops and guidance, in cooperation with OECD, and a recently published web page that explains the role of the Convention in Natech risk management. UNECE is also developing a report on an overview on different risk assessment methodologies, which will feature case studies on different installations and include a list of different software tools (objective to launch report 2022 at next conference). On land use planning, a new guidance document was issued (see link below) and workshops supporting the implementation of the guidance are planned to take place in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ms. Hirsch also reported about an information repository of good practices and lessons learned in land-use planning and industrial safety, which is being developed by UNECE together with the European Investment Bank (EIB), and invited also agencies to submit case studies. In addition there is a mailing list for members and partners, members of this meeting can be added. A number of publications and resources were discussed and links shared:
 - Safety guidelines and good industry practices publications on oil terminals, pipelines, firefighting water retention, tailings and pipelines: <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/jeg.html>
 - Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47851>
 - Implementation guide on the Convention for countries of Central Asia: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52980>
 - Link to the Industrial Accident Convention's webpage: www.unece.org/env/teia and directly, to the publications page: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/publications.html>
 - Further guidance materials can be found here: <https://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/envteiaguidelines/guidelines-and-templates.html>
 - Decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties of the Industrial Accidents Convention are available here: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/conventions/industrial-accidents/about-us/convention-bodies/envteiacop/cop-decisions.html>
- Maureen Wood, EU Joint Research Centre, presented centre updates (See PPT)
- Irina Zastenskaya, WHO, presented organization updates (See PPT). WHO HQ published a documents on NATECH: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272390/9789241513395-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Sandra Averous, UNEP, discussed new resources, notably a new report to assess 20 issues related to industrial chemicals management including nanomaterials. More info : UNEP/OCHA Joint Environment Unit online, Environmental Emergencies Centre <https://www.eecentre.org/>
- Oliver Wootton, UNITAR, noted that this was the first inter-agency meeting that UNITAR has participated in and is looking forward to future collaboration in this area. The main area of work related to industrial chemicals management is in regards to promotion of the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). UNITAR is promoting a number of activities around the GHS Partnership and hosts an E learning course on GHS implementation.

- Charlotta Benedek, UNEP OCHA, noted that there weren't any major programmatic updates at this time. However the agency has been involved in work related to the Beirut port explosion and various oil spills worldwide.
- Marc Gordon, UNDRR, presented agency updates (See PPT) and regional colleague, Sebastian Penzini noted that the agency is supporting around 15 countries in disaster management, data collection practices, risk knowledge and national risk reduction strategy.
- Marie-Ange Baucher, OECD presented updates from the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, the Joint Research Center and the UNECE on Natech Risk Management. There is a recent publication with experiences and best practices for NaTech risk management across OECD countries. In addition there are more than 40 examples of practices across countries from different stakeholders, presented as fact sheets. For more information:
 - [eNatech Database](#)
 - [UNECE industrial accidents website](#)

Discussion on Coordination and Collaboration

The discussion was opened by a question from ILO on how to maintain agency updates between meetings in order to ensure coordination without duplication of efforts. It was discussed that UNECE could add the excel coordination table spreadsheet on a dedicated website. ILO suggested that it would be useful to add a column for resources and web links, as well as updated contact information for each agency. UNECE agreed to post the Inter-Agency Group's activity table and its updated contact list on the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention web page, and to notify the Group when this is done. It was noted that UNIDO was absent from this meeting and it would be beneficial to the group to encourage participation in the future.

A number of upcoming events were discussed, including:

- UNECE Conference of the Parties on Industrial Accidents, taking place virtually 7th-9th of December 2020, as a hybrid meeting. The CoP will be focused on decision making due to the circumstances.
- UNECE will also be hosting an online seminar on mine tailings safety on the 1st of December 2020 to which the inter-agency group was also invited.
- UNECE further drew attention to the European Forum on DRR, to be held in November 2021. UNECE and OECD WGCA have proposed to prepare a joint session on industrial/chemical risk prevention and preparedness during this Forum, to confirmed with UNDRR, and may seek further input from the Inter-Agency Group.
- OECD Working Group on Chemical Accidents Meeting will be held from 27th to 29th of October as a fully virtual meeting. The agenda was shared last week with invitation email.
- EPSC is organizing a virtual event on the use of big data and digitalization to improve process safety (October 13-14th), registration is possible on the website [here](#).

UNDRR raised the point of whether any agency has viewed the COVID-19 pandemic as an industrial incident/accident itself due to the many interlinkages with disruptions in supply chains and other industrial activities. It was noted that the ILO excludes biological hazards from Convention No. 174, but that COVID-19 has been classified by certain member states as an occupational disease and there is mounting pressure to address the risks of the pandemic more holistically (more info [here](#)).

UNECE suggested that the Group consider more strategically raising the profile of chemical/industrial risk reduction, as an integral part of technological risk reduction, in the framework of the global disaster risk reduction community and the events and discussions taking place under the umbrella Sendai Framework for DRR. Ms. Hirsch mentioned that this was a shared vision with UNDRR, as confirmed by Mr. Gordon, as UNDRR sought further engagement and exchanges on technological risks in particular.

The EU Joint Research Center noted that the international community is too focused on emergency response and that more effort needs to be made on prevention efforts. The focus on emergency response is misplaced because when an accident happens, like the one in Beirut, there is little room for mitigation after the lives have been lost. As such, more visibility for prevention is needed, and thus the next conference could focus on prevention efforts in this area.

Closing

ILO provided a brief summary of the meeting and thanked the 12 agencies that remain actively involved in chemicals management and preventing industrial accidents. A number of areas for coordination were discussed including training and capacity building, development of technical guidelines and policy formulation, promotion of international standards and frameworks, and addressing emerging risks such as those posed by nanomaterials and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's meeting was particularly timely, as participants discussed the devastating August 4th major industrial accident in Beirut, and emphasized the need to shift towards a culture of prevention rather than responding to accidents once tragedy has already occurred and lives have been lost. The ILO expressed its commitment to enhancing inter-agency cooperation in the area of chemicals management and industrial accidents, especially during such a critical moment as the world copes with major shifts in the structure of work and the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was noted that for the 2021 edition of the inter-agency coordination group meeting that OPCW could be a candidate as the next hosting agency, as previously considered, and OPCW was invited to confirm their interest by email. Organizations which did not yet host meetings previously also included UNDRR and UNIDO. ILO will provide updated materials to the next hosting agency as per procedure. The meeting was closed at 17:00 CET.