

18 May 2021

English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents

Working Group on Implementation

Forty-first meeting

Geneva (online), 23 February 2021

Minutes of the meeting

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat opened the meeting. The following members of the Working Group on Implementation attended: Mr. Pavel Chukharev (Belarus); Ms. Reelika Kuusik (Estonia); Ms. Laura Vizbule (Latvia); Ms. Nicoletta Bouman (Netherlands); Mr. Vitalii Mutaf (Republic of Moldova); Ms. Anna Tsarina (Russian Federation); Ms. Sanja Stamenkovic (Serbia); Ms. Mária Šebestová (Slovakia); Ms. Helena Fridh (Sweden); and Mr. Raphaël Gonzalez (Switzerland). The secretariat welcomed the incumbents and new members of the Working Group (Ms. Kuusik, Mr. Mutaf, Ms. Šebestová). The meeting was serviced by the secretariat.

2. The secretariat recalled the adoption of the operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties due to extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1) at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Geneva and online, 7–9 December 2020), which apply to the meetings of the Convention's subsidiary bodies that require remote participation due to the COVID-19 pandemic until the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

3. The Working Group adopted the agenda (CP.TEIA/2021/WGI.1/Agenda) without changes.

2. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs

4. The secretariat introduced the list of candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions for the four-year term 2021–2024.

5. The Working Group elected Ms. Fridh as its Chair and Mr. Chukharev and Mr. Gonzalez as its Vice-Chairs, according to the rules of procedure (ECE/CP.TEIA/37) and the Working Group's terms of reference (ECE/CP.TEIA/32/Add.1), as amended at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Ljubljana, 28-30 November 2016).

3. Organization of work in the biennium 2021–2022 and beyond

6. The secretariat recalled the responsibilities and practices of the Working Group, including its terms of reference. The secretariat presented a background document containing

a proposed organization of work for the Working Group for the four-year term. This included work on: the facilitation of analysing late reports; the implementation of decision 2020/2 on strengthening the implementation of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1); and teleconferences to engage with countries and monitor the implementation of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme.

7. The Working Group agreed on the proposed organization of work, including to hold two meetings per year in the 2021–2022 biennium. The Working Group noted its responsibilities, including to give substantive guidance on the implementation of the Convention and to engage with countries through teleconferences, and that its work will be included in the next report on the activities of the Working Group presented to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2022.

4. Implementation of the Convention, including reporting

8. The secretariat provided an update on the status of the national implementation reports received from Parties and committed countries, including on the nine reports received after the reporting deadline¹ and on the five reports still missing². Since the results of these reports could not be included in the ninth report on implementation of the Convention (ECE/CP.TEIA/2020/5), the Working Group discussed whether to analyse the late implementation reports and how to proceed with those not yet received. The Working Group recalled the obligation of Parties under Article 23 to report on implementation and its role to review all implementation reports. Members also expressed the importance of reviewing implementation reports to identify good practices in implementing the Convention.

9. The Working Group agreed to conduct full reviews of the late reports and requested the secretariat to circulate the template for completion. Members agreed to coordinate their reviews in small groups according to sections and to complete their reviews by 30 June 2021, as to identify good practices and inform the organization of the envisaged seminar on good practices. The Working Group also agreed to integrate new members of the Working Group into small groups to analyse respective sections (see below table). The Chair requested that those members who do not recall the access information to the password-protected website where the reports are stored, should contact the secretariat.³

Section(s)	Persons in charge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy for implementation of the Convention • Scientific and technological cooperation and exchange of information 	Ms. Bouman (Netherlands) Ms. Šebestová (Slovakia)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and notification of hazardous activities with the potential to cause transboundary effects 	Ms. Stamenkovic (Serbia) Ms. Vizbule (Latvia)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of industrial accidents 	Mr. Gonzalez (Switzerland) Ms. Tsarina (Russian Federation)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency preparedness and response • Mutual assistance 	Ms. Fridh (Sweden) Mr. Mutaf (Republic of Moldova)

¹ Parties and committed countries that submitted their reports late: Azerbaijan (22 May 2020), Denmark (29 November 2019), Estonia (4 November 2019), Greece (11 May 2020), Kazakhstan (4 July 2020), Luxembourg (5 June 2020), Montenegro (29 April 2020), Netherlands (1 November 2019) and Uzbekistan (1 November 2019).

² Parties and committed countries that have not submitted their reports: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

³ Contact the secretariat at ece-teia.conv@un.org. The password-protected website address is as follows: <https://wiki.unece.org/display/NIR/National+Implementation+Reports+Home>.

• Participation of the public	Ms. Kuusik (Estonia)
• Decision-making on siting	Mr. Chukarau (Belarus)
• Reporting on past industrial accidents	

10. The Working Group recalled the importance of all Parties and committed countries submitting implementation reports. The Working Group agreed to contact focal points of the countries that have not yet submitted implementation reports by 9 March 2021, following which the Members agreed to report back on this correspondence to the secretariat by 23 March 2021. The Working Group requested the secretariat to thereafter prepare high-level letters to encourage those countries to submit reports.

11. The Working Group discussed the next steps for updating the reporting format and guidelines for the tenth reporting round. It requested the secretariat to circulate the Working Group's findings from reviewing the format and guidelines from the last reporting round before its next meeting.

12. The Republic of Moldova noted its recently adopted legislation on the control of major hazardous accidents involving dangerous substances and that this national law creates conditions to better implement the Convention.

5. Collection of good practices and exchange of information

13. The secretariat reported on its actions taken to make the good practices from the national implementation reports of the ninth reporting round available on the Convention's website,⁴ as per a prior request of the Working Group. The secretariat also reported on the launch of an Information Repository of Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Land-Use Planning and Industrial Safety.⁵ The Working Group welcomed the secretariat's work in preparing the overview of good practices and information repository and making them both available on the Convention's website.

14. The secretariat introduced a concept note on the organization of a seminar to exchange experiences and good practices on the implementation of the Convention, which is included in the Convention's workplan for 2021–2022 (ECE/CP.TEIA/42/Add.1).⁶ The Netherlands, represented by Ms. Bouman, agreed to be the lead party for the organization of the seminar.

15. The Working Group welcomed the concept note and discussed the next steps for organizing the seminar. The Working Group agreed that the concept note provided an excellent basis to move forward with the seminar preparations. Following the Chair's suggestion, the Working Group agreed that considerations of the good practices to be presented at the seminar should be limited to those provided in national implementation reports, but good practices identified within the reports submitted late should also be considered. The Working Group also agreed to establish a small group to, in cooperation with the secretariat, provide substantive guidance on and prepare for the seminar, including to design an agenda, suggest speakers and report on progress to the Working Group. Five members of the Working Group agreed to be part of the small group: Mr. Chukharev; Ms. Vizbule; Ms. Bouman; Mr. Mutaf; and Mr. Gonzalez. The small group members agreed to hold online meetings and to communicate by email, as need be, for their work on the seminar and they requested the secretariat to facilitate the scheduling of meetings. Ms. Bouman emphasized the importance of sharing the results from the seminar with the Conference of

⁴ Available at <https://unece.org/tables-good-practices>.

⁵ Available at <https://unece.org/overview-and-case-studies>.

⁶ Under I. Core activities, including activities to implement the long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030 (other than assistance activities), Exchange of experiences and good practices on the implementation of the Convention, including on good practices submitted through national implementation reports.

the Parties, and the secretariat suggested that this could, for example, be done as part of the Working Group's report on its activities in the biennium 2021–2022, further to the oral report by the Working Group to the Conference. The secretariat also informed participants that the next (twelfth) Conference of the Parties would be held at the end of 2022, during the following preliminary dates, in case held in Geneva: 29 November–1 December 2022.

6. Assistance and Cooperation Programme

(a) Teleconferences and engagement with beneficiary countries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme on implementation issues

16. The secretariat presented the modus operandi for the Working Group's engagement with Parties, committed countries and other reporting countries, which Parties adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Annex I of ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/11). The secretariat recalled that the objective of the modus operandi was for the Working Group to assist Parties, committed countries and other reporting countries in their efforts to implement the Convention and that engagement could involve, inter alia, correspondence and teleconferences with focal points. The secretariat also recalled the Working Group's mandate to engage with countries beyond beneficiaries of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme, if so desired, including countries in the European Union for example.

17. The Working Group reviewed their engagement with countries in the last term and discussed the division of subregional responsibilities among members for the current term. The secretariat proposed the following division of countries and responsibilities:

Subregion	Countries	Persons in charge
Caucasus and Eastern Europe	1. Armenia	Ms. Fridh (Helena)
	2. Azerbaijan	Mr. Gonzalez
	3. Belarus	(Switzerland)
	4. Georgia	Ms. Kuusik (Estonia)
	5. Republic of Moldova	Ms. Šebestová (Slovakia)
	6. Ukraine	
Central Asia	7. Kazakhstan	Mr. Chukharev (Belarus)
	8. Kyrgyzstan	Mr. Mutaf (Republic of
	9. Tajikistan	Moldova)
	10. Turkmenistan	Ms. Tsarina (Russian
	11. Uzbekistan	Federation)
South-Eastern Europe	12. Albania	Ms. Bouman
	13. Bosnia and	(Netherlands)
	Herzegovina	Ms. Stamenkovic (Serbia)
	14. Montenegro	Ms. Vizbule (Latvia)
	15. North Macedonia	
	16. Serbia	

18. The Working Group agreed to the above division of subregional responsibilities. The Working Group also agreed to send to the secretariat by end of June 2021 the list of countries with which it wishes to hold teleconferences at its next meeting.

(b) Country dossiers and engagement strategies

19. The secretariat recalled that the self-assessments, action plans and country dossiers are available online⁷ and accessible to members of the Working Group. The secretariat reminded the Working Group of the importance of updating country dossiers and of the timely review of self-assessments and action plans. The secretariat reminded the Working

⁷ <https://wiki.unece.org/display/TAAP/Self-Assessments+and+Action+Plans>

Group that three countries —Azerbaijan, Montenegro⁸ and Ukraine— are currently undergoing the process of updating their self-assessments and that technical missions to these countries, as per their respective requests, have been included in the current workplan and would be held, should the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic so allow and subject to confirmation of the necessary financial resources.

20. The Working Group agreed that the subregional groups will update the respective country dossiers and provide feedback to the documents submitted by the beneficiary countries under the Strategic Approach. The Chair noted the importance of this work for the Working Group's more active engagement with the countries and its more rigorous monitoring of the Strategic Approach.

(c) Self-assessment e-tool and Industrial Safety Measurement Indices (ISMI)

21. Ms. Tsarina presented an off-line self-assessment e-tool, prepared based on the Benchmarks document, that could be used to facilitate the preparation of the national self-assessments.⁹ The e-tool allows users to evaluate their implementation of the Convention answering questions in software and generating a report that can be submitted to the secretariat.

22. The secretariat introduced the results of its exchanges with the Major Accidents and Hazards Bureau of the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) on a project concerning the development of the Industrial Safety Measurement Indices (ISMI) tool, which is included in the Convention's workplan for 2021–2022, following a related proposal by Serbia, established partnership with the JRC and agreement by the Bureau.¹⁰ Initially developed for supporting implementation of the EU Seveso III Directive in the neighbourhood and other countries beyond the EU, this tool is now being developed to monitor and analyse progress in chemical accidents risk management more broadly, and to also facilitate the self-assessment under the Convention's Strategic Approach, where applicable. As such, the tool allows for: clearer structuring of information; enhancing collaborations on self-assessments at the national level; facilitating analysis of self-assessment results overtime; identifying key areas and priorities for future action; better understandings of the complementarities and synergies among EU legislation and the Convention; and identifying common needs for capacity building. The ISMI tool is a work in progress under the leadership of the JRC that will include inputs from the secretariat at defined stages of the process and partnership. The work is being carried out by three groups: Steering Group, led by the JRC, with active engagement by the secretariat and Slovenia, which is providing guidance on the tool's development, and Serbia, which confirmed its availability to join the group at the joint meeting of the Bureau and the Working Group (Geneva and online, 24 February 2021); technical team on the tool development, comprising JRC experts and the secretariat; and Test User Group, which will include countries testing the ISMI tool when available. ECE countries involved in the pilot phase and the envisaged testing of the ISMI tool are the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

⁸ The updated self-assessment of Montenegro has been sent to the South-Eastern European subregional group following the meeting

⁹ The tool is available on the password-protected page with self-assessments and action plans (<https://wiki.unece.org/display/TAAP/Self-Assessments+and+Action+Plans>) under the tab "Self-assessment tool".

¹⁰ Under II. Non-core activities, including assistance activities to support countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Development and integration of Convention's self-assessment indicators into Industrial Safety Measurement Indices for Measuring Progress in Implementation of the EU Seveso Directive and the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention (ISMI).

23. Ms. Stamenkovic provided further information on the pilot-phase of the ISMI tool. She recalled Serbia's early intention to draw the JRC's attention to the self-assessment tool already developed under the Convention and the useful and clearly defined indicators for evaluating implementation of the Convention, as this can be helpful in the development process of Seveso Progress Measurement Indices. Serbia had been subsequently informed that the JRC, in cooperation with ECE, proposed indicators that address self-assessments under the Convention, such as those addressing transboundary issues or the identification and notification of hazardous activities under the scope of the Convention. She also stated the benefits of the tool for communicating internally in countries and to external partners and for implementing the EU Seveso III Directive and the Convention.

24. The Working Group discussed and took note of the two presented tools, acknowledging that the ISMI tool could be a good addition for some countries which are at the same time in the process of approximating or harmonizing their legislations with the EU in this pilot initiative. The Chair noted that the e-tool presented by Ms. Tsarina should be offered to the Assistance and Cooperation beneficiary countries, once finalized. She encouraged the Working Group, especially also the new members, to test the e-tool and provide feedback. The Working Group agreed to provide such feedback to Ms. Tsarina by 30 April 2021 and requested that the e-tool be updated and presented at its next meeting.

7. Next Meeting

25. The Working Group agreed on its schedule of meetings, as follows:

- (a) 12-13 October 2021: Working Group on Implementation meeting online during the mornings of each day;
- (b) 1-2 February 2022: Working Group on Implementation meeting online;
- (c) 3-4 February 2022: Seminar on good practices in implementing the Convention, envisaged with interpretation into English, Russian and French;
- (d) 15-16 June 2022 (tbc): Working Group on Implementation meeting face-to-face or online.

8. Other business

26. The Chair asked the secretariat to send the minutes of the meeting to all members of the Working Group for comments and to share the key deadlines agreed at today's meeting by email. No other business was discussed.

9. Closing of the meeting

27. The Chair thanked the members of the Working Group for their engagement and the secretariat for its support before and during the meeting. She closed the meeting at 12.45 p.m. on 23 February 2021.
