

Conclusions of the Sub-regional workshop on land-use planning and industrial safety for South-Eastern Europe

Belgrade, Serbia, 27-29 October 2021

Main Objectives

- Provide a platform for countries of South-Eastern Europe to share their experiences and good practices in coordinating their land-use planning and industrial safety procedures and to support cooperation between the relevant experts for industrial accident prevention, including in a transboundary context
- Discuss challenges and opportunities for improved coordination and cooperation
- Improve the understanding and implementation of the following instruments, frameworks and guidance:
 - UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, with a particular focus on Article 7 on land-use planning and decisions on siting
 - Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development
 - Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing
 - Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes
 - UN-HABITAT International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning
 - Other relevant legal instruments, such as the UNECE Convention on Environmental Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - UNECE Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities, and related safety aspects
- Raise awareness of the linkages to Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 in the context of land-use planning and industrial safety.

Attendees and organizers

The sub-regional workshop brought together about 50 experts¹ in land-use planning and industrial safety from the **beneficiary countries** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) as well international experts from Belgium, France, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland. Participants comprised representatives of national authorities, international organizations and the private sector. The Chair of the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention attended the event in person while the Chair of the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration attended Session I remotely. The meeting was organized and serviced by UNECE secretariats to the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention and the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection (Serbia). **The workshop was organized thanks to financing provided by the Ministry of the Ecological Transition of France.**

¹ Most participants attended in-person and some connected remotely. The full list of participants as well as the event's agenda, presentations, related newspiece, photos and more can be found here: <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/349513>

Overview of the workshop

The workshop was held over two and a half days, comprised of five sessions of presentations, panel discussions and a practical exercise in the form of a role play. A site visit to an industrial site was originally planned but had to be replaced by a remote presentation by the operator due to the ongoing pandemic. In advance of the workshop, the different experts from each country liaised with each other and jointly prepared a presentation on behalf of their country, which signalled a positive step in improving collaboration across disciplines and building momentum in inter-institutional cooperation. The presentations and ensuing discussions enabled the country representatives and international experts to initiate communication on land-use planning and industrial safety, highlight progress made in various related fields, note the challenges faced, identify needs and agree on the possible ways forward for enhancing dialogue and cooperation in and among the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

A practical exercise involving a role play helped the participants to understand and practice methods to ensure greater safety through cooperation between land-use planners, industrial safety experts, industry operators, port authorities, ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders, within and across borders.

The workshop concluded with a summary of the identified needs and challenges of South-Eastern European countries that were revealed through the exchange of information and discussions at the workshop. The key outcomes of the sub-regional workshop are presented below.

Key outcomes of the subregional workshop:

Countries in South-Eastern Europe face challenges with respect to the integration of land-use planning and industrial safety and have recognized a lack of sustainable coordination and cooperation between land-use planning (LuP) and industrial safety authorities, within and across borders, in relation to decision-making on siting of hazardous activities and land-use:

- To address these challenges, countries acknowledged the need to:
 - *strengthen coordination* between LuP and industrial safety through the establishment of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, such as Working Groups that incorporate both land-use planning and industrial safety representatives, and *set up appropriate consultation procedures*
 - continue *establishing or revising legislation* that integrates land-use planning and industrial safety, in support of the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (Industrial Accidents Convention, Espoo Convention, Protocol on SEA, Aarhus Convention)
 - *Make use of available guidelines and policy documents*, such as the UNECE Guidance on land-use planning, the siting of hazardous activities and related safety aspects, UN-HABITAT Territorial Guidelines, Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes and the Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing
- There is a notable lack of *implementation of article 7 of the Industrial Accidents Convention* on siting and land-use planning.
- Countries recognized the need to proceed with the implementation of article 7, and the related annexes V and VI, to establish:
 - Policies on the siting of HA
 - Policies on the significant modifications to HA
 - Policies on significant developments in potentially affected areas (within and across borders)

- Seeking to reduce any accident impact on their own and neighbouring countries
- Involving all relevant national, regional and local authorities and affected stakeholders (within and across borders)
- Countries recognized that the implementation of article 7 at the national level can be a natural convener for the establishment of national cooperation platforms on land-use planning and industrial safety.
- Countries noticed a lack of *transboundary cooperation* on land-use planning and siting & acknowledged the need to strengthen transboundary cooperation, through the implementation of article 7 and the notification of existing and proposed hazardous activities to neighbouring or riparian Parties (art. 4), notably by using the Notification Template developed by UNECE, to notify their neighbouring and riparian countries about hazardous activities.
- Countries recognized the need to *exchange* further *information* on land-use planning and industrial safety. They expressed the need of sharing good practices with UNECE countries and international experts on this topic.
- Countries expressed the need for further support to *strengthen coherent policy-making* on the siting of hazardous activities and land-use planning, incl. through:
 - the facilitation of information exchange and the sharing of good practices, incl. through the information repository on land-use planning and industrial safety, to which countries can submit case studies of good practices and lessons learned;
 - capacity development and the provision of policy advice at the national level; and/or
 - support to the implementation of regional projects, fostering transboundary cooperation in the field of LuP and industrial safety
- Countries expressed the wish to consider developing *project proposals* across sectors and possibly countries, in particular under the Strategic Approach of the Convention's Assistance and Cooperation Programme.
- Countries took note of the *international experiences, good practices and lessons learned* presented by the countries in South-Eastern Europe, and the additional international good practices by Belgium (Flanders), France, Norway and Sweden, including on the risk communication & public consultation and agreed to further consider their applicability in their home countries
- The countries expressed interest in the *continuation of experience-sharing*, in particular on transboundary cooperation
- Countries expressed the need to *enhance coordination between local and state authorities* and *enhance capacities of local authorities*
- Countries recognized the relevance of land-use planning and industrial safety for the *implementation of the SDGs, the Sendai Framework and the New Urban Agenda*. They have developed national sustainable development strategies and taken steps to identify relevant SDG targets in relation to urban development and industrial safety
- Countries can give further consideration to "*localizing*" the SDGs in the context of land-use planning, industrial safety and sustainable urban development, involving all stakeholders (civil society, industry, national, local governments etc.)
- With regard to the experiences & good practices on *risk assessment in relation to land-use planning*, the countries in South-Eastern Europe recognized the necessity to intensify their work on the:
 - full transposition of the provisions of the Seveso III Directive related to land-use planning into national regulations and to ensure alignment with the legislation implementing the Industrial Accidents Convention
 - incorporate disaster risk reduction considerations into spatial planning, construction & permitting processes
 - take account of tailing management facilities (TMF) risks and NATECH (Natural Hazards Triggering Technological Disasters) considerations in land-use planning process,

including when planning for locations of new or modification of existing industrial sites and TMFs, by noting, in particular that:

- modifications at existing TMFs that are aggravating existing risks should not be allowed
 - modifications minimising risk should be encouraged
 - developments in areas near TMFs should be minimized, and the ones downstream of TMFs should be stopped.
- Countries recognized the need of future capacity-building activities, notably on the topic of on risk communication

With respect to the **practical exercise**, the aim of which was to help participants understand and practice methods to ensure greater safety through cooperation between land-use planners, industrial safety experts, industry operators and other stakeholders, within and across borders, the participants agreed that the role play:

- reinforced their understanding that involvement of a wide range of stakeholders (within and across borders) is crucial for impact assessment, proper planning and management of hazardous activities
- underlined the need to consult with neighbouring countries and to exchange information on land-use plans
- highlighted the need for agreeing on joint and transparent arrangements for consultation at the start of a process
- underlined the need to exchange information on existing risk assessment methodologies and to agree, where feasible on the use of a common risk assessment methodology (in case of different methodologies)
- showed that the outcome of dialogues between stakeholders and countries have been properly considered and reflected in final decisions.

UNECE wishes to thank all participants and speakers of the Subregional Workshop for their contributions.

The summary of the workshop evaluation will be shortly available here:

<https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Industrial-Accidents/events/349513>