

# Teleconference of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

Geneva and online, 10.00 – 12.00 CET, 10 February 2022

Minutes

## **Attendance**

The teleconference was moderated by the JEG co-Chairs Mr. Peter Kovacs (Hungary) from the Water Convention and Mr. Bojan Srdic (Serbia) from the Industrial Accidents Convention. Further to them, the following members of the JEG were present at the meeting: Ms. Lubov Hertman (Belarus), Mr. Pavel Danihelka (Czech Republic), Ms. Tuuli Tulonen (Finland), Mr. Gerd Winkelmann-Oei (Germany), Ms. Esi Esuon Biney (Ghana), Mr. Serik Akhmetov (Kazakhstan), Ms. Lendita Dika (North Macedonia), Mr. Ylber Mirta (North Macedonia), Mr. Vitalii Mutaf (Rep. of Moldova), Mr. Zoltan Torek (Romania), Ms. Dobrila Kujundžić (Serbia) and Ms. Danka Thalmeinerova (Slovakia). The following JEG members did not participate in the teleconference: Mr. Maratbek Ermatov (Kyrgyzstan), Mr. Taras Polischuk (Ukraine), and Ms. Iryna Grokhovetska (Ukraine).

The teleconference was organized and substantively prepared by the UNECE secretariat, represented by Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Ms. Claudia Kamke, Mr. Max Linsen and Ms. Ksenia Nechunaeva (Industrial Accidents Convention secretariat) and Ms. Veronica Girardi (Water Convention secretariat), in cooperation with the JEG co-Chairs.

## Opening

The opening session was moderated by the Co-chair from Serbia, who also welcomed the JEG on behalf of both Co-chairs, and explained the objectives of the teleconference. Franziska Hirsch provided introductory remarks, welcoming the new and renewed JEG members, highlighting those that represented countries that were previously not yet represented (Ghana) or have reengaged (Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine). The secretariat then presented an overview of the history of the JEG as well as its past achievements. It proceeded with a presentation of JEG-related work items that were adopted as part of the work plans of the Industrial Accidents Convention (by the eleventh Conference of the Parties) and the Water Convention (by the ninth Meeting of the Parties), based on background and work items for the teleconference of the JEG.

## Tour de table by Members of the JEG

The tour-de-table was moderated by the Co-chair from Hungary. It combined a short introduction of all present JEG members, stating their name, position and organization as well as their ambition and objectives with regard to the JEG work items. Among others, the following key points were stressed:

- Importance of integrating water and industrial safety issues, which in practice is not always the case, and of allowing for a dialogue between water and industrial safety experts
- The follow up to the 2019 contingency planning seminar will be taken up through the organization of the JEG seminar.
- Strengthening cooperation with the river basin commissions will be carried out throughout the JEG activities listed below. Based on a request by the Co-chairs, JEG members agreed that the ICPDR (represented by Adam Kovacs) should join the JEG meetings in the future.
- Slovakia noted importance of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) and the role it could play in preventing accidental pollution, which was supported by Serbia, North Macedonia, Kazakhstan and others.
- Germany mentioned that TMF-related work should focus on consolidating and sustaining results of past work (methodology and checklist development and updates).
- JEG members agreed that the development of a catalogue of good practices and the organization of a workshop (likely to be organized as of 2023, in line with the work plan of the Water Convention 2022-2024) could go hand in hand. The secretariat was requested to take this into account when further developing both activities and to prepare a suggestion for organizing these activities, to be presented to the JEG.

The support and interest to lead and contribute to JEG work items is listed in the table below.

<b>JEG work item</b>	<b>JEG members willing to contribute</b>	<b>JEG members willing to lead</b>
<b>JEG seminar and meeting</b> (Hungary, with the support of the JEG )	All members	Hungary
<b>Follow-up to 2019 contingency planning seminar;</b>		Hungary and Germany (as planned)
<b>Strengthening of cooperation with river basin commissions</b> (Hungary and Germany, with the support of the JEG, in cooperation with the Water Convention)	Slovakia (also beyond ICPDR)	
<b>Promotion and translation into national languages of JEG developed guidance and good industry practices</b> (Czechia, Rep. of Moldova and Romania on firefighting water retention and management)		Czechia, Moldova (as planned)

Germany on checklist methodology on TMFs, in cooperation with river basin commissions, such as ICPDR and the Water Convention, through the JEG)		Romania (as planned)
<b>Project on improving the safety of TMFs in Kyrgyzstan - Training and legislative options</b> (Kyrgyzstan, in cooperation with Kazakhstan, with financial support from Germany)		Germany shared that the project has been finished, touches upon a warning and alert system and Land use Planning aspects, and that the results will be available soon, having relevance for countries other than the project countries.
<b>Development of a catalogue/web page for accidental pollution events and good practice by countries, river basin commissions, including bilateral cooperation examples and one meeting on good practices</b> ([to be determined], with the support of the JEG and river basin organizations)	Ghana (potentially able to provide examples of cyanide spills), North Macedonia, Finland	Romania (tbc).
<b>Organization of a workshop on good practices for preventing accidental water pollution</b> (To be determined, with the support of the JEG and river basin organizations)	Slovakia, Germany, North Macedonia, Finland, Romania	Rep. of Moldova.

### Preparation of JEG seminar (and back-to-back meeting of the JEG)

This session was moderated by the Co-chair from Serbia. The secretariat presented the background, potential topics and format of a JEG seminar (1 day), based on the *Draft concept note for the JEG seminar and meeting in 2022*, as well as the outline for a meeting of the JEG (half a day back-to-back). The Co-chair from Hungary confirmed the date and location of the JEG meeting and seminar: 6-7 September in Budapest, to be organized as a physical meeting; he offered to explore possibilities to organize a site visit and arrange for Russian and possibly French interpretation, while he could not commit to this. The JEG agreed on the general topic of **'Contingency planning for TMF accidents caused by Natech events'** as a working title for the further organization of the seminar. This includes a perspective on climate change and accidental water pollution. It was further agreed that:

- the target audience should be better specified in the concept note, including also practitioners dealing with pollution, disaster risks and water management, academia (who can use JEG materials in their programmes), and industry (operators).
- JEG members would collect examples of Natech accidents leading to or threatening to lead to water pollution – both on the national and transboundary scale – from their country and/or within their organization. While the focus should be TMF Natech accidents, examples could also be provided from other industry related accidents. JEG members agreed to provide the examples ideally within one month after the teleconference. On that basis, the secretariat would further develop the seminar agenda.
- Potentially the option of a site visit and remote participation could be explored.
- An additional call would be organized with JEG members to prepare the seminar
- The secretariat would provide a timeline and updated concept note, including the target audience and draft seminar agenda.

### Closing of the teleconference

The Co-chairs closed the teleconference at 12.00 ET and thanked all JEG members for their contributions as well as the secretariat for the organization of the teleconference.