

Report on the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial  
Accidents Seminar on emerging risks in accidental water  
pollution: focus on natural hazard-triggered accidents

# PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTAL WATER POLLUTION

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on Water and Industrial Accidents

## SEMINAR ON EMERGING RISKS IN ACCIDENTAL WATER POLLUTION: FOCUS ON NATURAL HAZARD-TRIGGERED ACCIDENTS

- ❑ The Seminar was hosted by Hungary, with the support of Secretariat and financial support by Germany. It was held in Budapest, Hungary and online, 5 October 2022
- ❑ Over 70 participants (in-person and online): competent authorities within and beyond the UNECE region, representatives from river basin organizations, academia and the private sector
- ❑ The main objective of the seminar was to further strengthen accidental water pollution risk management in transboundary river basins
- ❑ The seminar aimed to provide a forum to discuss how Natech can be better understood, as well as to identify good practices and innovative approaches, structure around various challenges:
  - Challenge 1 – Understanding and preventing accidental water pollution as a result of natural hazards (Natech): lessons learned
  - Challenge 2 – Prevention by design: safe industrial installations in a changing climate
  - Challenge 3 – Innovative approaches to limit the consequences of accidental water pollution events

## 21ST MEETING OF THE JOINT EXPERT GROUP ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

- Held in Budapest and online, 6 October 2022
- Good attendance, mostly in person, only 4 members absent
- New and previously nominated JEG members were present
- Hosted by the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, with financial support of Germany and organizational support by the Secretariat
- JEG members
  - Evaluated the seminar “Emerging risks in accidental water pollution: focus on natural hazard-triggered accidents” with summary of key actions (presented by Mr. Srdic, Co-Chair of the JEG from Serbia, during the Natech risk management seminar yesterday);
  - Discussed further impressions and ongoing policy developments on:
    - pollution event from a mine tailings incident and a transboundary pollution event covering Slovakian and Hungarian territory in 2022 and
    - implications of the ongoing military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on industrial safety and pollution;
  - Discussed on reporting on JEG activities in the biennium 2021–2022
  - Discussed on JEG activities in the biennium 2023–2024
  - Welcomed JEG members from Ukraine (as a new Party to the Convention) and discussed potential support actions



## 21ST MEETING OF THE JOINT EXPERT GROUP ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

- The JEG then discussed which of the JEG activities would require further discussion, including on availability of resources. The following points were raised:
  - To further investigate cases such as the accidental pollutions in the Odra and Slana rivers, together with other examples e.g., in Ghana or elsewhere, and including River Basin Organizations. ICPDR indicated that it could offer to host the workshop.
  - To further develop the knowledge exchange on accidental water pollutions by including both recent pollution events and early warning as a topic.
  - To strengthen operational capacity to prevent and be better prepared for industrial accidents as a consequence of the ongoing war in Ukraine; and enhance transboundary cooperation, such as transboundary preparedness and response exercises, and assessment(s) of contaminated sites. Depending on available resources, this could include field trips, knowledge exchange between other UNECE countries having experience with contaminated sites as a consequence of the military actions.
- The Co-Chairs requested the secretariat to elaborate an internal implementation plan for the activities proposed.
- The secretariat added the need for JEG members to secure resources for the implementation of the JEG-related activities, following which it would develop the plan.

# JEG-RELATED WORK PLAN ITEMS

## as discussed at the JEG meeting

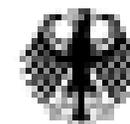
- Preventing Accidental Water Pollution, including an exchange of experiences and good practices among riparian countries and river basin commissions, focused specifically on early warning and alert systems and Natech events, based on a collection of examples of Natech accidents, and a **JEG workshop on preventing accidental water pollution, including early warning and alert systems**;
- The development of a catalogue/web page that will provide information on accidental water pollution events, including Natech events, good practice by countries and river basin commissions, and bilateral cooperation examples;
- These items could be implemented through
  - a workshop covering the items of the recent Odra and Slana pollutions,
  - further investigation of the components of Warning and Alert Systems and deployment of Warning and Alert Systems/ Early Warning Systems by river basin organizations.
  - With the repository/catalogue/web page as an outcome of the workshop
- Holding a JEG meeting in during the biennium 2023-2024.
- Holding potential additional JEG meetings



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!