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25 November 2022

**Twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA COP 12)
(29 November-1 December 2022)**

Statements of the EU and its Member States

EU Statement on agenda item 1: Opening

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my privilege and honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We would like to thank the President, the Bureau, the Executive Secretary, the Secretariat of the TEIA Convention and the Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) of Norway for their hard work in preparing this twelfth Conference of the Parties.

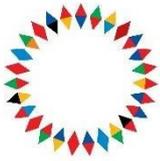
We are delighted that we can meet in-person, thereby ensuring the continuity in the work of the Convention, after four years without meeting physically because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At European Union level we have experienced how much the community working on industrial safety has missed these face-to-face meetings, where discussions are so important to continue promoting the safety culture.

The European Union and its Member States wish to express their highest appreciation for the important intersessional work conducted since COP11 and give thanks to all those involved in that work.

Also, let me express the full solidarity of the EU and its MS with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine, supported by Belarus, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, our Convention objectives to protect human health and the environment and undermines international security and stability. The EU deplores also the involvement of Belarus in the aggression^[1].

The EU reiterates its demands that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders and abide by UN General Assembly resolution entitled "Aggression against Ukraine" supported by 141 states at the 11th emergency special session.



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At all times Russia must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular with respect to the protection of civilians, women and children.

Finally, I wish to finish with a very warm welcome to Ukraine as a Party to the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, following the deposit of its instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General in New York on 6 July 2022.

We wish to highlight Ukraine's continued commitment and dedication to preventing and mitigating the impacts of industrial accidents nationally, and across borders, even more in the current context of the war.

It proves, if still needed, the commitment of Ukraine towards the prevention of industrial accidents. We are looking forward to collaborating with Ukraine on enhancing industrial safety and related transboundary cooperation in order to safeguard the well-being of people and the environment in Ukraine as well as in its neighbouring and riparian countries.

All of this would of course not have been possible without the full commitment of the Ukrainian authorities, the Secretariat to the Convention and the experts who contributed to Ukraine's accession to the TEIA Convention. I would like to express my warmest thanks and gratitude to all of you who have contributed with your dedicated work to this achievement.

The necessity to further improve industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response to, as well as the dissemination of the safety culture within the UNECE region, unites us all. It lies at the core of this Convention's mission. By fulfilling it, we will uphold our collective commitment to reaching a zero pollution ambition in favour of the protection of the environment and human beings.

These objectives can only be achieved through a continuous strengthening of the cooperation between Parties and the Secretariat of the Convention, but also through the full participation of civil society.

I know that I can count on your commitment and expertise to pursue these common objectives. You have accompanied the Convention implementation over the past decades. I am sure we will be equally close partners in the future. And I am convinced that this involvement will be pursued and reinforced as we face new challenges.

I wish us all a fruitful COP12.

Thank you.

^[1] Under Article 3 of UN General Assembly resolution 3314 (1974), Belarus, as a State that has "[allowed] its territory, which it has placed at the disposal of another State, to be used by that other State for perpetrating an act of aggression against a third State" is deemed equally responsible for an act of aggression against Ukraine.