

12th COP of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

(29 November - 2 December 2022)

Statement by Ukraine

Under agenda item 1.

Dear Mr/Madame Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

First, let me congratulate all participants with 30th Anniversary of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. Ukraine is delighted to participate in this solemn COP as a new member of this unique instrument aimed at protecting people and environment from the destructive consequences of industrial accidents.

As a new party to this Convention, Ukraine is willing to join others in common efforts to prevent and respond to industrial accidents, as well as react to other contemporary global challenges.

At the same time Ukraine faces the biggest challenge ever - as the existence of our state and the Ukrainian people as such are at stake due to the unprovoked and unjustified military invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which started on 24 February 2022 and now lasts for more than 9 months.

Being the highly industrialized country Ukraine has numerous industrial facilities holding hazardous chemical substances, ranging from the agricultural sector to the oil and gas industry, pulp and paper, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, machine-building and mining. It has also several nuclear power plants, one of which – the biggest in Europe Zaporizhzhia NPP - is occupied and threatened by the Russian military forces.

Since the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine, the risk of industrial accidents has been aggravated significantly. Numerous attacks have been committed against industrial facilities in Ukraine leading to serious technological consequences, which affected the population and environment of Ukraine as well as neighboring countries. Several fuel depots and gas pipelines have been bombed, with additional reports of burning warehouses storing chemicals. Large-scale fires at infrastructure and industrial facilities lead to air poisoning with hazardous substances. Pollutants can be carried by winds over long distances causing transboundary effects.

As a result of Russia's terrorist attacks against Ukrainian energy grid, situation in this sphere became even more critical. Ukrainian government is doing its best to mitigate negative consequences for population and economy. However, energy consumption in Ukrainian households is limited. Ukraine will not be able to continue exporting electricity to Europe. Regular power outages caused by Russia's attacks undermine economic activity and recovery.

Almost 1/3 of Ukraine's territory requires demining. Since the start of full-scale Russia's invasion, >270,000 explosive objects were identified and neutralized.

Environmental damage in Ukraine caused by Russia's war is estimated at more than 37 bln EUR. More than 2,200 crimes of ecocide have been registered since 24 February.

In revenge for its military losses on the ground, Russia continues terrorizing Ukrainian industrial facilities and civil population. From 10 October to 23 November, Russia launched almost 600 missiles. Russian officials openly state that Ukraine must fulfil Kremlin's demands, otherwise civilians will continue suffering.

In the view of the above, the decision of the European Parliament taken on 23 November, which recognized Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism and as a state that “uses means of terrorism” is very timely and well deserved by the Russian state, as deliberate attacks and atrocities committed by the Russian forces and their proxies against civilians in Ukraine, the destruction of civilian and critical energy infrastructure as well as other serious violations of international humanitarian law amount to acts of terror and constitute war crimes.

Let me also remind you that similar decisions were taken lately by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (21 November), PACE (13 October), as well as Parliaments of Lithuania (10 May), Latvia (11 August), Estonia (18 October), Poland (26 October), Czech Republic (15 November) and Netherlands (24 November), and we believe there will be many more in the nearest future.

Across the UNECE region and beyond, the war has led to increased level of potential industrial accidents, that must be properly considered and addressed by the Convention and related UN bodies, that could provide important guidance in this regard.

Trying to overcome challenges related to the damage of its industry due to the Russian aggression, Ukraine hopes for the support from the parties of this Convention, in particular in addressing the industrial safety and security as well as in the process of post-war reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine.

I thank you