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**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 2: Thirtieth anniversary of the Convention

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

At this COP, we celebrate a key milestone in the prevention, preparedness and response to major accidents with potential transboundary effects – the thirtieth anniversary of the entry into force of the UNECE Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. With the recent deposit by Ukraine of its instrument of ratification, there are now 42 Parties to the Convention. This is a great achievement.

This milestone provides us with a renewed political momentum, giving us an excellent opportunity to look back with pride and forward with hope.

Cooperation between countries is paramount to designing effective prevention, preparedness, and disaster response measures for industrial accidents. The Sandoz disaster, where 30 tonnes of toxic chemicals were released into the Rhine River, resulted in the negotiation of the 1992 UNECE TEIA Convention. Since its inception, the Convention has supported countries in improving industrial safety and disaster response preparedness to avoid future accidents, especially those with transboundary effects.

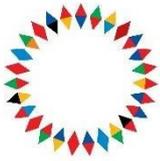
Prevention of major industrial accidents is also a long-standing concern in the European Union. The first piece of regulation that addressed this challenge was the Seveso I Directive, adopted already 40 years ago in 1982. For 20 years, while the number of industrial plants has increased from approximately 4 000 to 12 000 in the EU, we have reduced the number of major accidents to around 30 .

We have also reaffirmed the importance of protecting the environment, including human health, against industrial pollution. In the European Green Deal, the European Commission committed itself to strengthening its action in favour of industrial safety at both EU and international level.

Furthermore, public awareness, support and action are increasing, as governments, NGOs, and businesses promote and spread the industrial safety culture and policies.

However, as we are sadly used to saying, one accident is still one accident too many.

These celebrations should not distract us from the many tasks ahead. Much needs to be done, at country level and through international cooperation, in order to prevent industrial disasters from happening, such as the recent Beirut explosion in 2020, where more than 200 people were killed and over 7000 injured, as well as the recent toxic chlorine gas leak in the Port of Aqaba in Jordan in 2022, where at least 10 people died and more than 251 were injured.



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Besides, industrial accidents prevention, preparedness and response are important concerns in the context of the global ongoing environmental crises, with the loss of biodiversity, the global warming, as well as the war in Ukraine.

Droughts and extreme fires threaten safety of industrial plants located in the surroundings of forests. Solutions deployed to address the climate crisis or the many issues caused by the war in Ukraine also trigger the emergence of new risks. This is the case for the development of maritime gasification platforms to accommodate deliveries of liquid gas transiting by boat, or of the large-scale batteries storage to support the energy transition through massive electrification. We will hopefully have the opportunity during this COP12 to exchange on these emerging issues.

In addition, we denounce and regret the Russian aggression of Ukraine. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia is causing serious environmental degradation which will have profound long-term effects on the country's natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity. These effects will not be restricted to Ukraine, as pollution and other damaging impacts are likely to spread well beyond national borders. The repeated and deliberate military strikes on refineries, chemical plants, energy facilities, industrial depots or pipelines, the country's air, water and soil have been polluted by toxic substances which cause longer-term environmental and health threats. Post-war recovery and reconstruction will be a monumental task and will require comprehensive, well co-ordinated and well-funded efforts. Our support to and cooperation with Ukraine will be of utmost importance during this phase also. We would need to think carefully about how to effectively mobilise the resources available in the different fora to avoid overlapping and unnecessary expenditures.

Finally, I wish to highlight and congratulate the TEIA Convention for its proactive work on this challenge of industrial safety and recognize the commitment of its Secretariat, Chair and Bureau members. The outstanding work they have performed for 30 years with still limited resources has proven to be of great value for the Parties to the Convention but also beyond.

To help achieve the objectives of the Convention, we must collectively continue to support its full implementation and ensure stable and sufficient funding.

We look forward to further exchanges under your capable leadership, Madam President. As in the past years, you can count on the EU and its Member States' strong support for the future of the Convention.

Again, I congratulate the UNECE TEIA Convention on its 30th anniversary.

Thank you.