

# **UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents**

*European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental  
Law (IMPEL) Seminar on Lessons Learnt from Industrial Accidents  
Marseille, France, 23-24 May 2023*



**UNECE**

# Overview

- Industrial Accidents Convention
  - *Background*
  - *Scope*
  - *Main components*
- Safety Guidelines & Good Practices
- Assistance & Cooperation Programme
- Recent seminars with good practices & lessons learnt
- Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System



# Background

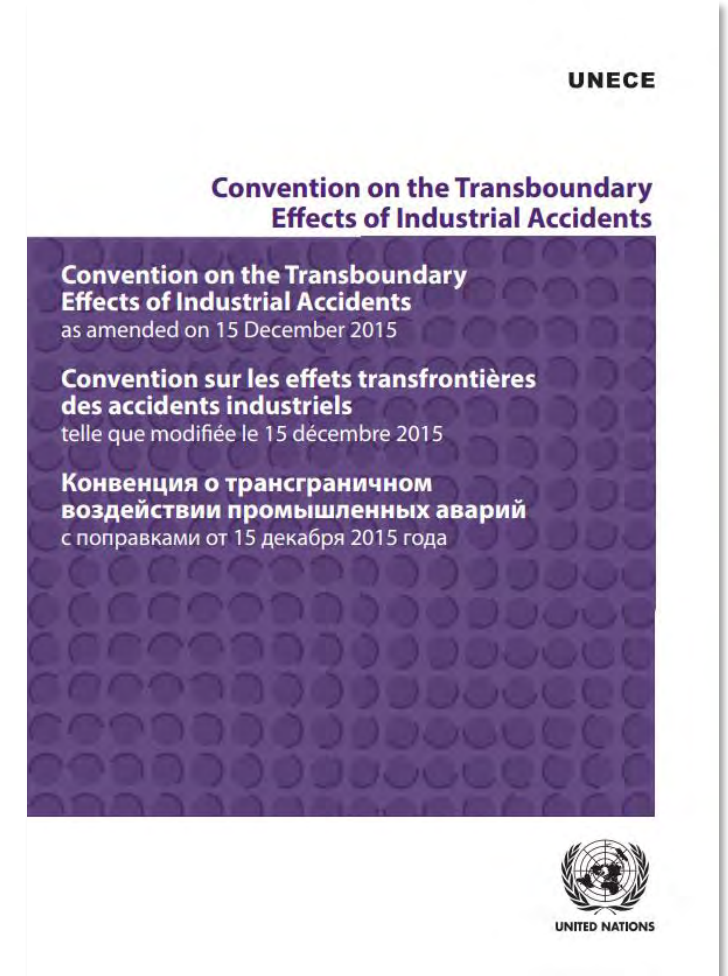


*Sandoz spill,  
Schweizerhalle,  
Switzerland  
(1986)*

- Convention designed to protect human beings and the environment against the effects of industrial accidents through:
  - *Prevention, preparedness and response to industrial accidents*
  - *Transboundary and international cooperation to address hazardous activities capable of causing transboundary effects*
- Negotiated following Sandoz chemical accident at Schweizerhalle in 1986  
>> adopted in 1992 >> entered into force in 2000
- 42 Parties in the UNECE region (including the EU and 25 MS)
- Focus on governance and institutional structures: cooperation and coordination across authorities, industry, public

# Scope of Convention

- Applies to the prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents capable of causing transboundary effects
- Natural hazard-triggered technological disasters (Natech); important to address Natech risks due to increasing impacts of climate change
- Provisions cover “hazardous activities” (e.g. manufacture, use, storage, handling, or disposal):
  1. *Containing a substance/mixture at a quantity listed in Annex I; and*
  2. *Capable of causing transboundary effects in case of accident*
- Examples of hazardous activities: fertilizer plants, chemical plants, oil storage facilities



# Three main components

## Prevention

- ✓ **Identify hazardous activities** capable of causing transboundary effects
- ✓ **Notify neighbouring or riparian countries** if existing or proposed hazardous activity could affect them
- ✓ **Establish policies on siting** of new and modifications to existing hazardous activities
- ✓ **Research & development**
- ✓ **Exchange information & technology**

## Preparedness

- ✓ **Prepare on- and off-site contingency plans** for hazardous activities, including to address transboundary aspects
- ✓ **Prepare compatible / joint contingency plans** across countries to address transboundary effects
- ✓ **Ensure the public that could be affected** has access to information on hazards/risks and contingency plans, opportunities to participate in decision-making on prevention and preparedness and access to relevant judicial proceedings

## Response

- ✓ **Coordinate response measures** within a country and between countries
- ✓ **Use of the industrial accident notification system**
- ✓ **Assist other Parties and cooperate in responses** to industrial accidents

# Safety Guidelines & Good Practices



- *Many developed by the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, under the UNECE Water Convention and Industrial Accidents Convention*
- *Guidelines and checklists recommended for use by Parties and UNECE member States by the Conventions' governing bodies; implementation supported through Assistance and Cooperation Programme*

# Assistance & Cooperation Programme

- Created in 2004; renamed and rebranded in 2018
- Aim to support countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in implementing the Convention. Beneficiary countries increasingly provide assistance to each other
- Projects have preparatory phase (high-level commitment declaration fact-finding missions and awareness-raising missions) and implementation phase (needs-driven capacity building activities, identified based on the Strategic Approach)
- Some recent projects:
  - *Launch of National Policy Dialogues on Industrial Safety in Serbia (2021) – supported by Ministry of Ecological Transition, France*
  - *Project on supporting countries of Central Asia in strengthening the safety of mine tailings (2020) – supported by Swiss Federal Office for the Environment*
  - *Project on addressing industrial accident risks in national DRR policies and plans of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2022) – supported by European Union*
  - *Sub-regional Workshop on Land-use planning & industrial safety for Eastern Europe & the Caucasus (2019) – supported by Ministry of Ecological Transition, France*



ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION PROGRAMME

# Recent seminars

## UN/OECD Seminar in follow-up to the 2020 Beirut Port Explosion

- *Co-organized by UNECE\*, ILO, IMO, UNEP/OCHA JEU, UNDRR, OECD*
- *Focused on addressing the effective risk management of the storage, handling and transport of ammonium nitrate and AN-based fertilizers in port areas and beyond*
- *Identified, shared lessons learnt from the Beirut port explosion, other AN-related accident*
- *Took stock of legal and policy instruments and guidance/tools for their implementation*
- *Fostered cooperation at the international/national levels*

## Seminar on Good Practices & Lessons Learnt in Implementation

- *Organized by the Convention's Working Group on Implementation*
- *Covered good practices on: identification and notification; information to and participation of the public; decision-making on siting and land-use planning; scientific and technical cooperation and exchange of information*
- *Exchanged information on and promoted good practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the Convention to provide examples of filling implementation gaps*

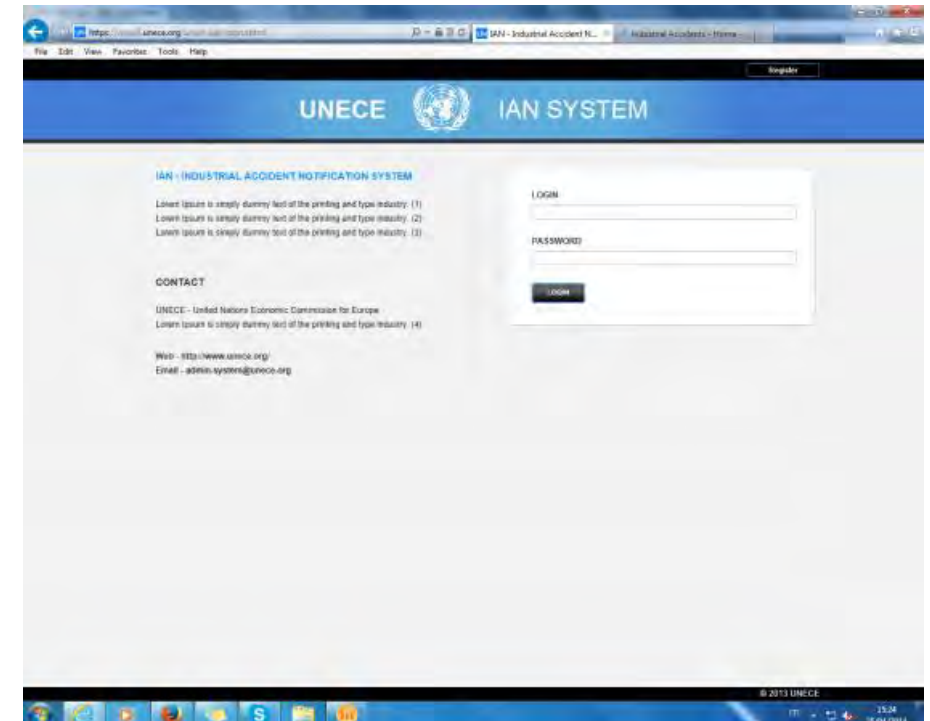
## UNECE/OECD Seminar on effective Natech risk management

- *Co-organized by UNECE and OECD*
- *Exchanged information and shared experience and practices regarding Natech risk management, and inspired further action to prevent, prepare for and respond to Natech risk*
- *Provided a platform for member States to strengthen their efforts to implement the Convention*
- *Fed into COP Decision 2022/1 on Natech risk management and the development of the forthcoming joint OECD/JRC/UN Guidance on Managing Natech Accident Risk: A Guide for Senior Leaders in Industry and Public Authorities*



# Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System

- Launched in 2008
- “Points of Contact” are designated by Parties to the Convention to notify other Parties of an industrial accident and to request mutual assistance
- Database contains contact details of all registered Points of Contact
- Three categories of reports: Early-warning; Information; Request for Assistance
- Once a report is submitted online, it is transmitted to the relevant Points of Contact
- Facilitates transboundary cooperation



# Thank you for your attention

More information: [www.unece.org/env/teia](http://www.unece.org/env/teia)

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