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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY  
EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

Fifth meeting  
Geneva, 25–27 November 2008  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT OF THE BUREAU ON THE ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CONVENTION  
SINCE THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

Report by the Chairperson

1. This report summarizes the work of the Bureau on the tasks entrusted to it by the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in its decision 2006/1 (ECE/CP.TEIA/15/Add.1). It includes the results of the three joint meetings of the Bureau with the Working Group on Implementation held on 15 and 16 February 2007 in Geneva, on 23 and 24 October 2007 in Tonsberg, Norway, and on 17 April 2008 in Karlstad, Sweden, as well as the Bureau's meeting held on 7 and 8 July 2008 in Rome. The Bureau's proposals related to the budget for future activities are presented in the draft decision on priorities, workplan and resources under the Convention for 2009–2010 (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/11).

2. The following Bureau members attended all four Bureau meetings held in 2007 and 2008: Ms. Giuliana Gasparini, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties (Italy), Mr. Bernard Gay, Vice-Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties (Switzerland), Mr. Nikolay Savov (Bulgaria), Mr. Chris Dijkens (Netherlands), Ms. Jasmina Karba (Slovenia) and Mr. Tobias Biermann (European Commission). Mr. Lajos Katai-Urban (Hungary) participated in all meetings but the one in Rome. Mr. Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei (Germany) attended the meetings in Geneva and Tonsberg, Ms. Anahit Aleksandryan (Armenia) the meetings in Geneva and

Rome and Mr. Aleksandr Dokuchaev (Belarus) the meeting in Geneva. Mr. Vadim Lozhechko (Belarus) participated to the meeting in Rome instead of Mr. Dokuchaev. In addition, Mr. Cristiano Piacente and Ms. Elisabetta Scialanca (both Italy) participated in all four meetings. The Convention secretariat attended all four meetings.

## **I. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

### **A. Reports on the completion of the implementation of the basic tasks and fact-finding missions**

3. In its decision 2006/1, the Conference of the Parties entrusted the Bureau, in cooperation with the Chairman of the Working Group on Implementation, with the tasks of: (a) inviting Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the implementation phase on the basis of a document demonstrating they had completed the remaining basic tasks; (b) accepting further reports of fact-finding missions to the remaining countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe (SEE); and (c) deciding whether or not to provide assistance to them in the Programme's implementation phase.

#### **1. Completion of the implementation of the basic tasks**

4. The Bureau considered the reports submitted by Kyrgyzstan and Georgia on the finalization of the basic tasks at its eleventh meeting (Tonsberg, 23–24 October 2007). It agreed that the report submitted by Georgia contained sufficient information and that the country had implemented all the remaining tasks. On this basis, the Bureau decided to invite Georgia to join the capacity-building activities of the second phase of the Assistance Programme. This decision was communicated to Georgia by the secretariat and formally confirmed by a letter inviting Georgia to the first capacity-building activity under the Assistance Programme.

5. The Bureau noted that the report from Kyrgyzstan provided information on the implementation of two of the three basic tasks that were assessed as unimplemented at the time of the fact-finding mission. It did not contain any information about the implementation of the UNECE Industrial Accident Notification (IAN) System. The Bureau invited the secretariat to contact Kyrgyzstan requesting that the country provide the missing information. Following the communication with the country, the Kyrgyz focal point reported that he was currently working on the completion of the remaining tasks. By the time of the submission of the present document, the secretariat had not received the final report from Kyrgyzstan.

6. No report was received from Tajikistan. The Bureau requested the secretariat to remind Tajikistan to report on the implementation of the basic tasks had still not been implemented at the time of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Formal letters of reminder had been sent in August 2007 and in January and June 2008, each time followed by informal e-mails, but remained unanswered.

## **2. Fact-finding missions**

7. Four fact-finding missions were organized in 2007: to Croatia (20–22 August), to Kazakhstan (17–20 April), to Serbia (11–14 June) and to Uzbekistan (9–12 July 2007).

8. At its eleventh meeting, the Bureau discussed the results of the missions to Serbia, Uzbekistan and Croatia as presented in the reports of the fact-finding teams. The reports showed that Croatia and Serbia had implemented all the basic tasks under the Convention and those countries were recommended to actively participate in the capacity-building activities organized within the second phase of the Assistance Programme. The report from Uzbekistan showed that the country had not finalized the implementation of two tasks, and the country was recommended to take the necessary steps to implement these remaining tasks and to report to the Bureau as soon as possible.

9. The Bureau decided, after having reviewed the fact-finding mission reports, to invite Croatia and Serbia to participate in the capacity-building activity addressing their needs. This decision was communicated to the countries by the secretariat, and was formally confirmed by the invitation to participate in capacity-building activities organized under the Assistance Programme's implementation phase.

10. The Bureau acknowledged the results of the fact-finding mission to Uzbekistan and decided to invite that country to implement the remaining tasks as soon as possible and to report to it, a request communicated to Uzbekistan by the secretariat. Several letters, including to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were sent to support the finalization of the basic tasks.

11. At its twelfth meeting (Karlstad, 17 April 2008), the Bureau discussed the report of the fact-finding mission to Kazakhstan. It agreed with the conclusions of the report that the country had implemented all the basic tasks under the Convention and decided to invite Kazakhstan to participate in the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme. This decision was communicated to Kazakhstan by the secretariat and formally was confirmed by the invitation to participate in capacity-building activities under the Assistance Programme's implementation phase.

12. Through its decisions in 2007 and 2008, the Bureau together with the Chairman of the Working Group on Implementation invited four countries – Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Serbia – to participate in the assistance activities under the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme.

13. The Bureau also welcomed the expression of interest from Albania to join the activities under the Assistance Programme and thus benefit from the needs-driven assistance to further strengthen the Convention's implementation. At its eleventh meeting, the Bureau requested the secretariat to work with Albania in preparing the fact-finding mission.

### **B. Assistance to countries lacking capacity to implement the basic tasks**

14. In its decision 2006/1, the Conference of the Parties invited the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation, in cooperation with the secretariat and the authorities of Bosnia and

Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as other possible countries, to develop and deliver needs-driven guidance on strengthening the capacities of these countries to enable them to implement the basic tasks under the Convention.

15. At the February 2007 meeting in Geneva, the Bureau, together with the Working Group on Implementation, had agreed on a concept for providing assistance as outlined in the report of the fact-finding mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The concept foresaw: (a) increasing the awareness of authorities of the tasks under the Convention; and (b) helping authorities to prepare a plan of action for implementation of the Convention, starting with the basic tasks, with the help of international experts.

16. The Bureau and the Working Group agreed that teams of experts should be sent on awareness-raising missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to explain the roles and the tasks of the authorities under the Convention and to agree on the principle and scope of an action plan for those countries' authorities to implement.

17. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hosted an awareness-raising mission on 26 and 27 November 2007. The mission allowed the country's authorities to improve their understanding of the different tasks under the Convention as well as to receive valuable information on good practice with respect to implementing them. The Bureau and Working Group on Implementation welcomed the outcome of the awareness-raising mission and the work done by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in terms of follow-up, in particular the development of the action plan. It proposed to invite the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to present its action plan at the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to report on progress made with respect to implementing it.

18. The Bureau also agreed to organize a pre-mission to Montenegro, as it was a new UNECE member State and thus might need awareness-raising on the different tasks under the Convention and on the requirements and objectives of the Assistance Programme.

### **C. Capacity-building activities under the implementation phase**

19. In its decision 2006/1, the Conference of the Parties entrusted the Bureau, together with the Working Group on Implementation and with the assistance of the secretariat, to further elaborate the action plan for the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme as soon as possible based on document ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/4 and comments made by Parties and other UNECE member countries at the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

20. The Bureau, with the Working Group, taking into account the importance of maintaining the momentum in providing assistance to the countries which were accepted to participate in the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme, decided to organize priority needs-driven capacity-building activities, as discussed at the February 2007 meeting in Geneva. At the same time, the decision was made to elaborate on the strategic approach in the long term.

## **1. Organized capacity-building activities**

21. The Bureau, in cooperation with the Working Group and the secretariat, organized the following capacity-building activities in 2007 and 2008: (a) a capacity-building activity with the aim of initiating a process to further strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks under the Convention in EECCA and SEE countries (Kyiv, 5–7 December 2007); (b) a workshop on strengthening the safety measures at hazardous activities (Vadul lui Voda, Moldova, 13–14 December 2007); and (c) a training on the identification of hazardous activities to take place on 21 and 22 October 2008 in Belarus. The outcome of the first two activities is presented in the progress report on the Assistance Programme (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/4).

## **2. Strategic approach**

22. The Bureau, together with the Working Group, established a task force at the February 2007 meeting in Geneva to elaborate strategic planning for the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme in such a way that it established specific activities and priorities for the short and long terms, including indicators and related financial planning, so as to form a strategic approach. Members of the Bureau and the Working Group from Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, as well as the secretariat, participated in the task force. They received support at a later stage from Switzerland and the European Commission.

23. At its next meetings, the Bureau, with the Working Group, discussed the draft document prepared by the task force and made a number of recommendations. The Bureau agreed that the final version described well the strategic approach to be promoted among EECCA and SEE countries. It expressed its appreciation for the work of the task force and for the very sound ideas proposed as a mechanism for steering the programme. The Bureau decided to submit the strategic approach to the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties for approval and subsequent implementation, as contained in document ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/5.

## **II. UNECE INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

24. The Bureau discussed and accepted the work undertaken by the secretariat in implementing the decision 2006/3 on increasing the effectiveness of and enhancing the communication procedures within the UNECE IAN system as presented in document ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/7, in particular on selecting an information technology consultant tasked with developing the Web-based application under UNECE IAN system and establishing a steering group to support this development.

25. The Bureau took note of the outcome of the Third consultation and the training for the points of contact designated within the UNECE IAN System for industrial accident notification and mutual assistance (Sibiu, Romania, 1–3 April 2008). It welcomed the efforts of the points of contact and the secretariat to further improve the effectiveness of the IAN System and, in particular, the future performance of comprehensive analytical exercises with the use of the IAN Web-based application.

### **III. ACTIVITIES OF THE JOINT EXPERT GROUP ON WATER AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**

26. The Bureau discussed progress made with respect to the activities undertaken by the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, expressing its concern that the Joint Expert Group had not received sufficient commitment for its activities from Parties to the Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The Bureau therefore supported the Joint Expert Group's call (see the progress report of the Joint Expert Group, ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/8 - ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/6) for review and amendment, if needed, of the Group's workplan, so that it reflected the interests and needs of Parties to both Conventions.

27. The Bureau welcomed the results of the workshop on the safety of tailing management facilities (Yerevan, 12–14 November 2007) and the progress achieved in finalizing the guidelines on the safety of tailing management facilities, developed under the Joint Expert Group. The Bureau decided to forward the safety guidelines and good practices for tailing management facilities as contained in document ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/9 - ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/5 to the Conference of the Parties for its endorsement.

### **IV. PROTOCOL ON CIVIL LIABILITY**

28. The core group established by the Bureaux of the Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes agreed on the organization of a workshop to review developments, problems and concerns regarding the ratification of the Protocol on Civil Liability. A workshop was held on 21 and 22 May 2007 in Budapest. The Bureau took note of the key findings of the workshop, which had been presented in a category II document to the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007).

### **V. FUNDING**

29. The Bureau, together with the Working Group on Implementation actively participated in raising the necessary funds to implement the workplan for 2007–2008 as adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its fourth meeting. It also requested the task force elaborating the strategic approach to look into different funding possibilities for the planned activities.

30. The Bureau took note of the secretariat's reports on the use of financial resources presented at the Bureau's eleventh and twelfth meetings.

### **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

31. Representatives of the Bureau participated in the meeting between the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the governing bodies of the UNECE Conventions in February 2007, which discussed in particular the preparation of the discussion paper on the

implementation of the UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) for the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”.

32. In view of the interest of pipeline experts in the safety guidelines and good practices for pipelines, the Bureau agreed that these should be published. It requested the secretariat to take necessary steps to publish them both in a print version and on the Internet. In view of the costs involved, the Bureau also decided not to republish the Convention with the amended annex I which entered into force on 19 March 2008, but to issue an addendum.

33. In view of the growing need for translation of non-parliamentary documents from English into Russian and vice versa, the Bureau agreed with the proposal of the secretariat to arrange a permanent contract for “translation on demand” using a fixed rate per 1,000 words translated.

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