



The UN ECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

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History, rationale and status of the Industrial Accidents Convention

- Industry is never risk free from major accidents
- Flixborough (1974) and Seveso (1976) accidents attracted attention to the industrial safety issue regarding design and management
- Bhopal, Mexico City (1984) and Basel (1982) accidents showed the vulnerability of nearby residents and the environment
- Baia Mare (2000) cyanide spill further showed that disasters recognize no borders





History, rationale and status of the Industrial Accidents Convention

- ECE focused on prevention of industrial accidents and their transboundary effects in the early 1990s
- Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents:
 - Adopted on 17 March 1992
 - Signed by 26 UNECE member countries and the EU
 - Entered into force on 19 April 2000
 - Currently 41 Parties to the Convention, including EU





History, rationale and status of the Industrial Accidents Convention

• Goals of the Convention

- Protection of human health and the environment against industrial accidents
 - Prevention of major accidents
 - Preparedness to major accidents
 - Response to major accidents
- Active international cooperation between the contracting Parties, before, during and after an industrial accident





History, rationale and status of the Industrial Accidents Convention

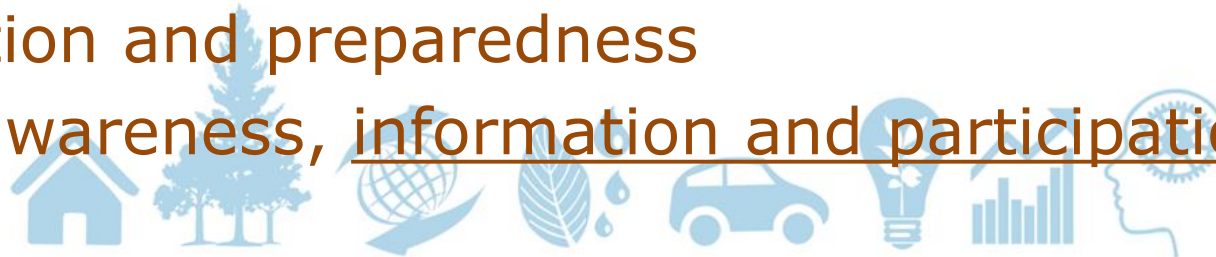
- Part of a pan-European legal environment framework
 - Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its eight Protocols;
 - Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its Protocol on Water and Health;
 - Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; and
 - Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters





Main requirements of the Industrial Accidents Convention

- Identification of HAs capable of causing transboundary effects and notification to potentially affected countries
- Prevention of accidents through technical, organisational and management measures
- Preparedness to IAs through availability of up-to-date and tested emergency plans and procedures
- Response through effective mitigation, cooperation and coordination and notification to affected stakeholders
- Land use planning as part of the major accident prevention and preparedness
- Public awareness, information and participation





Links between the Convention and the EU Seveso Directive

- The Seveso Directive is a tool for the EU Member States to implement the Convention
- Both the Seveso Directive and the Convention are based on the same principles – prevention, preparedness and response
- The Seveso Directive is more detailed and has some additional requirements that complement the Convention





Transboundary Cooperation and the Convention

- Transboundary aspects mentioned already in the preamble
 - Taking into account the fact that the **effects of industrial accidents may make themselves felt across borders**, and **require cooperation among States**
 - Affirming **the need to promote active international cooperation** among the States concerned before, during and after an accident, to enhance appropriate policies and **to reinforce and coordinate action at all appropriate levels** for promoting the prevention of, preparedness for and response to the transboundary effects of industrial accidents,
 - Noting **the importance and usefulness of bilateral and multilateral arrangements** for the prevention of, preparedness for and response to the effects of industrial accidents
- Reiterated in Art. 2 and clearly defined as part of the scope of the Convention
 - This Convention shall apply to ... **international cooperation concerning mutual assistance, research and development, exchange of information and exchange of technology** in the area of prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents.





Transboundary Cooperation and the Convention

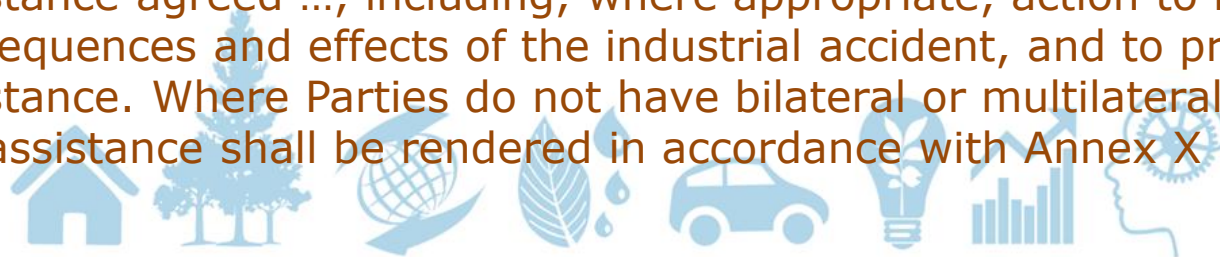
- Transboundary cooperation is one of the main requirements in Art. 3, defining the general provisions of the Convention
 - 1. The Parties shall ... take appropriate measures and **cooperate within the framework of this Convention**, to protect human beings and the environment against industrial accidents ...
 - 2. The Parties shall, **by means of exchange of information, consultation and other cooperative measures** ... develop and implement policies and strategies for reducing the risks of industrial accidents
- Transboundary cooperation in the area of industrial accident preparedness required in Art. 8
 - 1. ... the Parties concerned **shall inform each other of their contingency plans**.
 - 2. ... The Party of origin **shall provide to the other Parties** concerned the elements it has for the elaboration of contingency plans.
 - 3. ... Parties concerned shall endeavour **to make such plans compatible**. Where appropriate, **joint off-site contingency plans** shall be drawn up in order to facilitate the adoption of adequate response measures.





Transboundary Cooperation and the Convention

- Transboundary cooperation in the area of industrial accident response required in Art. 11
 - 2. In the event of an industrial accident, or imminent threat thereof, which causes or is capable of causing transboundary effects, the Parties concerned **shall ensure that the effects are assessed--where appropriate, jointly** for the purpose of taking adequate response measures. The Parties concerned shall endeavour
- Mutual assistance promoted in Art. 11
 - 1. If a Party needs assistance in the event of an industrial accident, it may ask for assistance from other Parties, ... A Party to whom a request for assistance is directed shall promptly decide and inform the requesting Party whether it is in a position to render the assistance required and indicate the scope and terms of the assistance that might be rendered.
 - 2. The Parties concerned shall cooperate to facilitate the prompt provision of assistance agreed ..., including, where appropriate, action to minimize the consequences and effects of the industrial accident, and to provide general assistance. Where Parties do not have bilateral or multilateral agreements ..., the assistance shall be rendered in accordance with Annex X hereto...





Benefits of being Party to the Convention

- Powerful tool that allows countries to improve industrial safety
- Opportunity to exchange experience and best practices in the area of major accident prevention, preparedness and response
- Opportunity to improve legal, administrative and expert capacity
- UNECE tools to improve safety in particular economic sectors:
 - Online training course "Introduction to Industrial Accidents" (available in English, Russian and French)
 - Guidelines to facilitate the identification of hazardous activities for the purposes of the Convention (Guidelines for Location Criteria)
 - Safety guidelines and good practices for Tailing management facilities
 - Safety guidelines and good practices for Pipelines
 - Safety guidelines and good practices for Oil terminals (in development)
 - Checklist for preparation and inspection of a safety report
 - Guidelines for preparation and inspection of a safety report





Thank you for your attention!

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