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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
Thirteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on
Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA COP 13)
(Geneva, Switzerland, 27-29 November 2024)
- Statements by the EU and its Member States

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#), for information, a compilation of statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States at the abovementioned meeting.

**Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary
Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA COP 13)
(Geneva, Switzerland, 27-29 November 2024)**

- Statements by the EU and its Member States -

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Madame President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,
It is my privilege and honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We would like to thank the President, the Bureau, the Executive Secretary, the Secretariat of the TEIA Convention and the Directorate for Risks Prevention of France for their hard work in preparing this thirteenth Conference of the Parties.

The European Union and its Member States wish to express their highest appreciation for the important intersessional work conducted since COP12 and give thanks to all those involved in that work. The EU and its Member States reiterate their unwavering support to Ukraine, and condemnation of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU and its Member States again urge Russia to immediately stop its indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, which grossly violate the Convention's objectives to protect human health and the environment and undermine international security and stability, and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The EU and its Member States reiterate the importance of ensuring the protection of all civilians at all times in line with international humanitarian law.

The necessity to further improve the prevention of, preparedness and response to industrial accidents, as well as the dissemination of a culture of safety within the UNECE region, unites us all. It lies at the core of this Convention's mission. By fulfilling it, we will uphold our collective commitment to reaching a zero pollution ambition in favour of the protection of the environment and human beings.

These objectives can only be achieved through the continued strengthening of our cooperation between Parties and the Secretariat of the Convention, but also through the full participation of civil society.

I wish us all a fruitful COP13.

Agenda item 3b: Bureau’s small Group on Industrial safety under the energy transition

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

the European Union (EU) and its Member States greatly appreciate that, based on the recognition by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting (Geneva, 29 November–1 December 2022) of the need to address emerging issues of concern for industrial safety, the Bureau established a small group dedicated to that topic, to lead the work in the area of the energy transition with the support of the secretariat. It is particularly important to raise awareness on this issue and ultimately to promote action in view of preventing and tackling pollution, ensuring a healthy environment and strengthening the sound management of industrial processes, mining, chemicals and waste, while facing new challenges related to energy transition and changes of energy sources.

Agenda item 3c: Decision on work on the industrial safety of the energy transition under the Convention

Position Paper:

Adopt decision with option 2 continuing the work on ISET in the framework of an extended Small Group under the Bureau, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and Joint Expert Group as well as in cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy and its relevant expert groups. The EU and its MS would like to reflect in the draft decision on the possibility for the Bureau Members of this Group to invite relevant experts from governments, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector and academia, within and outside the ECE region, to contribute voluntarily to its activities as needed.

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

In relation to future work of the Convention related to industrial safety under the energy transition, the EU and its Member States would like to support option 2 suggestion to continuing the work on industrial safety of the energy transition in the framework of an extended Small Group under the Bureau, in cooperation with the Working Group on Implementation and Joint Expert Group. Moreover, we suggest close cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Sustainable Energy and its relevant expert groups in order to facilitate that the outcomes of the extended Small Group may feed into relevant work on the energy transition under UNECE. We also suggest to reflect in the draft decision on the possibility for the Bureau Members of this Group to invite relevant experts from governments, international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector and academia, within and outside the ECE region, to contribute voluntarily to its activities as needed. This is important to allow for relevant expertise.

The work conducted by the Small Group created in 2023 has been very valuable and is adapted to the current needs we have as regards industrial safety under the energy transition. It has in particular conducted a consultation with Parties in the form of a survey to understand better their needs and expectations under the fast-evolving strategic environment of industrial safety in the energy transition. We now need to reach a common understanding of safety trends and risks associated with the energy transition and to advise the Conference of the Parties on strategic directions to take in that regard. In addition, we are of the view that the work of the convention should stay focused on the promotion of dialogue across neighbouring countries, without duplicating work done in other fora, such as OECD. In that context, the small group under the Bureau appears like the most suitable solution, in terms of resources. We would like to volunteer to lead this work under the Small Group.

Agenda item 4b: Election of officers and other members of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

the EU and its Member States would like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau of the TEIA Convention. The Bureau plays a very important role in many aspects of the implementation of the Convention and we are convinced that hard work of the whole bureau, under the able leadership of France, will greatly contribute to achieving the goals that we are about to agree upon in the coming days.

Agenda item 5: Financing Tour de Table

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much to the Secretariat and the Bureau for organising this roundtable, aimed at securing sustainable funding for the Convention's biennial workplans, in view to ultimately strengthen implementation of the long-term strategy until 2030. It is a priority to achieve the objectives of the Convention, namely to protect human beings and the environment against industrial accidents by preventing such accidents as far as possible, by reducing their frequency and severity and by mitigating their effects.

On the questions related to the commitments, financial contributions and pledges to support implementation of the 2025-2026 workplan, the EU will continue to contribute voluntarily to the trust fund as it has always done. In 2023, the EU adopted a decision under the Neighbouring, Development and International Cooperation instrument, to finance a new project "Strengthening the Safe and Secure Management of Hazardous Substances to Prevent and Mitigate Industrial Accidents Worldwide" for a total budget of 585,000 EUR with an EU contribution of 500,000 EUR. This year, the EU adopted a decision to provide a contribution of 500,000 EUR in 2025 for the project "Addressing emerging environmental and industrial risks linked with decarbonization and the global energy transition". This shows our efforts to contribute to the financing of UNECE TEIA Programme of Work.

Regarding the efforts to be done to enhance sustainability and predictability of funding, the European Union and its Member States continues to support the sustainable financial mechanism and related decision, which were adopted in 2018. In that context, the EU and its Member States are of the view that it should be the sole role of the Parties to decide which activities need to be funded first with regular contributions and non-earmarked contributions. The EU and its MS are convinced that regular contributions and non-earmarked contributions should be used first to carry out the activities identified as core, or as activities to implement the long-term strategy for the Convention until 2030 (other than assistance activities). Considering the recurrent difficulties to fund all the activities included in the previous Workplans, the EU and its Member States would recommend that the Secretariat and the Bureau establish a prioritisation of the activities listed in the draft work programme considering their role in achieving the long-term strategy objectives. Furthermore, we acknowledge the role of the Bureau in following up on the implementation of the Workplan of the Convention in close cooperation with the Secretariat as stipulated in the Sustainable financial mechanism, adopted at the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2012.

Furthermore, the role of the Bureau is also essential in following up on the implementation of the Workplan of the Convention in close cooperation with the Secretariat.

Last but not least, the EU and its MS would like to recall that the SFM states the principles of predictability and affordability of biennial workplans. To that end, the level of resource requirements should not differ substantially between subsequent workplans. The EU and EU MS also would like to call on implementation of point 19 of the SFM stating that parties that have not made or pledged a contribution to the trust fund, and that have not made or pledged an in-kind contribution to the implementation of the workplan, will be encouraged to do so. Should Parties request advice as to the amount of financial contributions or the nature of possible in-kind contributions, the secretariat will provide such advice.

Agenda item 6c: Election of the members of the Working Group on implementation for the period 2025-2028

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

the European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of Ukraine by Russian armed forces, a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter, as well as the involvement of Belarus. The EU and its Member States firmly oppose Russian / Belarusian candidates in the elections to the Working Group.

The EU and its Member States would like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Working Group on implementation. The Working Group plays a very important role to support full implementation of the Convention and thus to help achieve its objectives of the Convention.

Agenda items 7a: Guidance on managing risks from natural hazards to hazardous installations and 7b: Panel Discussion on Disaster risk reductions, natural hazard triggered technological disaster risk management and climate change

The EU and its Member States welcome and endorse the publication of the Joint OECD/UN/JRC Guidance on Managing Risks from Natural Hazards to Hazardous Installations (Natech): A Guide for Senior Leaders in Industry and Public Authorities.

Building on shared experiences and practices regarding Natech risk management, this publication will be an essential tool to provide support to the Parties in their efforts to implement the Convention and the OECD Guiding Principles for Chemical Accident Prevention, Preparedness and Response, notably their recommendations on Natech. It will also strengthen our capacity to anticipate Natech risks and reinforce their management.

Please allow me to thank the experts and contracting parties involved in the drafting of this publication.

We now call on Parties to use this guidance for sound Natech risks management.

Agenda item 8a: Highlights of assistance activities in the last 20 years

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU and its MS would like to convey their sincere appreciation for the progress achieved under the Assistance and Cooperation Programme and congratulate the beneficiaries for their efforts and the donors for their support. The EU and its MS also wish to thank the TEIA Parties that support the Assistance and Cooperation Programme in financial and non financial matters.

Agenda item 8b: Twentieth anniversary of the Assistance and Cooperation Programme: achievements, challenges and the way forward

At this COP, we celebrate a key milestone in the prevention, preparedness and response to major accidents with potential transboundary effects – the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Assistance Programme.

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.

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

As in the past years, you can count on the EU and its Member States' strong support for the future of the Convention.

Again, we congratulate the UNECE TEIA Convention on the 20th anniversary of the Cooperation and Assistance Programme.

Agenda item 9: Risk assessment

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and its Member States welcome the publication “Risk Assessment for Industrial Accident Prevention: An Overview of Risk Assessment Methods, Selected Case Studies and Available Software”. This is an essential tool to increasing knowledge on risk assessment for industrial accident prevention in the UNECE region and beyond, for policy-makers and for operators. As such, we strongly encourage Parties to make use of this publication, to develop effective risk assessments and to ensure that risk assessment results are taken into account in siting procedures, safety measures, contingency planning, information to the public and more. The EU and its Member States also support the development of follow up activities provided that available financial resources are allocated.

Agenda item 10: Strengthening the safe and secure management of hazardous substances to prevent and mitigate industrial accidents

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

First allow us to recall our appreciation to the Secretariat to have organised, at our request, at COP11 in 2020, a seminar in follow-up to the 2020 Beirut port explosion. We now have the opportunity to implement concretely some of the key outcomes of the 2021 webinar to improve the management of hazardous substances, by bringing together international actors from a variety of areas and by sharing knowledge on land-use planning, public participation, siting and risk assessment components for safely and securely managing hazardous substances, as well as on accident notification. By promoting and improving the implementation of international legal and policy instruments, standards and mechanisms we will strengthen our capacity to address the risks of handling hazardous substances and related accident prevention, preparedness and response. We would like to highlight the importance of prevention, which should not only be incident driven but should be a regular base of solid and safe operation of installations, in order to avoid incidents and reduce their harmful impact.

The EU is glad to see these priorities reflected in the work programme for 2025-2026, in the continuity of our action at EU level.

The necessity to further improve industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response to, as well as the dissemination of the safety culture within the UNECE region, unites us all. It lies at the core of this Convention’s mission. By fulfilling it, we will uphold our collective commitment to reaching a zero pollution ambition in favour of the protection of the environment and human beings.

These objectives can only be achieved through a continuous strengthening of the cooperation between Parties and the Secretariat of the Convention, but also through the full participation of civil society.

Agenda item 11: Workplan for the Convention for the biennium 2025–2026 and its financing

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for the preparation of the draft Workplan and resource requirements for the Convention for 2025–2026, which we support.

On the draft Decision on guiding principles for financial assistance, the EU and its MS inform the Secretariat that contributions from the EU and its Member States shall neither be used to finance assistance for the benefit of Belarus and/or the Russian Federation, nor to co-finance assistance projects or activities together with the Russian Federation and/or Belarus.

Agenda item 12: Prevention of accidental water pollution

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

the EU and its MS's welcome and appreciate the work of the Joint Expert Group, the only body serving both the Industrial Accident and Water Conventions since 1998, which is facilitating exchange of knowledge and good practices on accidental water pollution prevention, as well as preparedness and response, e.g. through transboundary preparedness and response exercises. Due to the climate change we are experiencing the extremisation of natural hazards, in particular extreme floods and prolonged droughts, increasing the risks of accidents (Natech) and exacerbating accidental pollution.

In fact, climate change intensifies, but it is not the sole driver of these water-related risks. They are compounded by unsustainable water management, pollution and ecosystem degradation. To address the urgent need to step up action on sustainable water management, the European Commission's President von der Leyen announced in her Political Guidelines for 2024-2029 the adoption of a new European Water Resilience Strategy. The Strategy will set up a pathway for a water resilient Europe by 2050, focusing on crucial action areas including infrastructures, innovation & industry, and security. The Strategy will also foster transboundary cooperation, which, as we are all well aware, is essential to avoid and timely react to industrial accidents. We would like to encourage Parties to further support, financially and with expertise, the JEG activities in the incoming biennium and beyond.

Agenda item 13: Mine Tailing Safety

Adoption of draft decision on the identification of tailings management facilities as hazardous activities.

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and its Member States welcome the update of the Guidelines on identification of hazardous activities for the purpose of the Convention. This will contribute to more comprehensively cover tailing management facilities in line with EU legislation and activities.

In that context, the EU and its MS welcome any future work aimed at more comprehensively covering the hazards and risks of tailings management facilities and supports the proposed draft decision on the identification of tailings management facilities as hazardous activities.

Panel Discussion on Mine Tailing Safety

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thanks to the Secretariat and the Bureau for organising this panel discussion. This is an excellent opportunity to present what is done at EU level to assess hazards and risks of tailings management facilities.

In that respect, the Waste Framework Directive is the EU's legal framework for treating and managing waste. General rules for the assessment of hazardous substances are laid down in its Annex III "Properties of waste which render it hazardous" and are further specified by the Decision 2000/532/EC establishing a List of Waste.

The Extractive Waste Directive (2006/21/EC) aims to prevent or reduce any adverse effects on the environment due to the management of mining waste, which comprises the safety of tailings facilities. For every extractive waste facility the operator needs to classify the waste. Annex II of the Directive contains criteria to that end and Commission Decision 2009/360/EC completes the technical requirements for waste characterisation and contains general rules on the collection and evaluation of information necessary for the characterisation.

More stringent provisions apply to facilities that present a higher risk of impact on the environment and human health in the event of an accident, which are the so-called 'Category A' facilities, i.e. those that e.g. contain hazardous waste in accordance with the Waste Framework Directive or dangerous substances above a certain threshold. Commission Decision 2009/337/EC lays down further criteria for the classification. It contains amongst others provisions on the determination of thresholds and an assessment methodology for dangerous substances.

Agenda item 15: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Industrial Accident Notification System

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and its Member States thank the Secretariat for this presentation. We agree to the proposed steps to upgrade the IAN System, including to organise a test.

Agenda item 16: Linkages with the Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals and policy/governance integration

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The EU and its Member States agree on proposed actions to promote policy integration between activities under the TEIA Convention's implementation and under the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.
