

# China blast highlights need to continuously improve industrial and chemical safety – solutions exist

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A major accident at a chemical plant in China last week, which killed around 65 people and injured 94 more – with several dozen still unaccounted for – highlights the urgent need to strengthen measures to ensure safety for the transport of dangerous goods and industrial facilities.



According to [initial reports](#), the blast in Yangchen in eastern China was caused by a tanker truck which caught fire, setting off an explosion in a benzene storage area. China has witnessed a number of major industrial accidents in recent years, including in Tianjin in 2015 (which killed 173 people, injuring many more) and in Jilin City

in 2005 (where the effects of pollution in the Songhua River were experienced downstream in Russia). The Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered local authorities to step up actions to stop similar incidents happening in the future.

Fortunately, solutions exist to prevent these kinds of accidents from occurring and to reduce the severity of their consequences. Applying the safety provisions of legal agreements administered by UNECE, together with the practical tools and guidelines developed under their auspices, helps to reduce the risks of industrial and chemical accidents.

The European Agreement concerning the International Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road ([ADR](#)) – which is open to accession by all United Nations Member States – offers a key practical instrument that covers both the packaging and labelling of dangerous goods, and the construction, equipment and operation of the vehicles carrying them. ADR, which is already used in over 50 countries around the world, is one of the key road safety Conventions hosted by UNECE, and helps to ensure safe transport – within countries and across borders – of a wide range of hazardous products including petroleum products, gases, chemicals, agrochemicals and fertilizers.

Supporting the improved safety of industrial facilities, UNECE's [Industrial Accidents Convention](#) helps countries prevent, prepare for and respond to industrial accidents, especially those with potential cross-border effects. The Convention also covers transportation on the site of chemical plants. The Convention has developed [safety guidelines, standards and good industry practices](#) that are available for use by national and local authorities worldwide. These include practical [guidance on the siting of hazardous activities](#), a [Checklist for Preparation and Inspection of a Safety Report](#), and guidelines to address the specific safety risks of facilities including [oil terminals](#), [pipelines](#) and mining [tailings management facilities](#).

Applying these tools and building countries' capacities to implement them significantly reduces the risks of tragic industrial and chemical accidents.

UNECE stands ready to share its expertise and experience developed through years of cooperation on improving the safety for the transport of dangerous goods and management of industrial facilities.

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**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**Information Unit**

**Palais des Nations,**

CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

