



## **International POPs Elimination Project**

*Fostering Active and Efficient Civil Society Participation in  
Preparation for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention*

---

# **Regional Workshop to Explore Environmental and Health Impacts of chemicals**

**Olga Speranskaya, Head of Program on Chemical Safety  
Eco-Accord**

**Russian Federation  
November 2005**

## About the International POPs Elimination Project

On May 1, 2004, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN <http://www.ipen.org>) began a global NGO project called the International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provided core funding for the project.

IPEP has three principal objectives:

- Encourage and enable NGOs in 40 developing and transitional countries to engage in activities that provide concrete and immediate contributions to country efforts in preparing for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention;
- Enhance the skills and knowledge of NGOs to help build their capacity as effective stakeholders in the Convention implementation process;
- Help establish regional and national NGO coordination and capacity in all regions of the world in support of longer term efforts to achieve chemical safety.

IPEP will support preparation of reports on country situation, hotspots, policy briefs, and regional activities. Three principal types of activities will be supported by IPEP: participation in the National Implementation Plan, training and awareness workshops, and public information and awareness campaigns.

For more information, please see <http://www.ipen.org>

IPEN gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Global Environment Facility, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Swiss Agency for the Environment Forests and Landscape, the Canada POPs Fund, the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Mitchell Kapor Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, New York Community Trust and others.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the institutions providing management and/or financial support.

This report is available in the following languages: English

# Regional Workshop to Explore Environmental and Health Impacts of chemicals

## Project Objectives

1. Address the need for a legislation based on the precautionary principle and to prepare authorities and organisations in Russia for stricter European chemicals legislation.
2. To create a forum in which environmental organisations, researchers and decision makers can discuss the environmental impact of chemicals.

## Survey of Russian chemicals management

A survey of the chemicals management policy of the Russian Federation was carried out in Russia. Compliance, monitoring and sanction opportunities were studied. This survey sought to assess Russian chemical management policy including both the existing and draft laws and regulations. In addition, the study reviewed the national policy in the sphere of regulation of chemical substances, including *inter alia* issues of chemical safety, control and enforcement. The survey also incorporated good practices of sustainable chemical management, both at the governmental and NGO levels.

The survey provides specific recommendations for improvement of the Russian legislation in the sphere of regulation of chemical substances. In particular, these recommendations call on Russian authorities to ensure integration of chemical safety issues into governmental development strategies, programs and plans; to ratify international environmental treaties on chemical safety and ensure efficient public participation in their implementation; to guarantee transparency of finance flows from international financial institutions and donor countries for elimination of toxic chemicals and search for safer alternatives. (See Attachments 1 and 4)

## Electronic discussion

The survey of the chemicals management policy of the Russian Federation was discussed for three months on Eco-Accord's electronic news service. This electronic discussion period made it possible to provide information to more than 2500 subscribers all over the EECCA region. Eco-Accord received lots of comments and suggestions from NGOs, scientific and business experts. These comments made an important contribution to the quality of the survey.

## Workshop

Eco-Accord in cooperation and with financial support from Chemsec (Sweden), The International POPs Elimination Project (IPEP) and the European Eco-Forum held a workshop entitled "Health and Environmental Impacts of Toxic Chemicals: Chemical Management Policies of Russia and EU Countries". It was the first multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder seminar in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region (EECCA) focused on a detailed discussion of opportunities to harmonise national chemical management legislations of the EECCA countries with REACH. The workshop was held on November, 16, 2005 on the eve of European Parliament's decision

concerning REACH - Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals which completely overhauls the regulation of industrial chemicals in the EU. The workshop in Moscow opened a number of meetings where issues of REACH implementation and its compliance with EECCA national systems of standards were addressed. In January 2006 similar meetings were held in Belarus and in Ukraine.

The Moscow workshop was attended by NGOs from the EECCA region, representatives from governmental institutions, business and academia. Presentations were made by EECCA experts, representatives of Chemsec, IPEP and Eco-Forum working on issues of chemicals management; chemical safety; classification and labeling of chemicals; risk assessment; chemicals impact on human health and the environment; and public involvement in decision making on toxic substances.

The first day of the workshop discussed the survey described above along with wider questions and topics concerning necessary elements of regulatory policy.

The second day of the workshop was focused on the role of NGOs in addressing problems of toxic impacts on human health and the environment. Outcomes of the most successful IPEP projects were presented. Workshop participants discussed perspectives of NGO involvement in activities on chemical safety and international events on chemicals management. Ways in which local NGOs could become more active in addressing issues of chemical safety were discussed along with the obstacles to NGO participation.

An important outcome of the workshop was the decision to form an EECCA NGO network of experts working on chemical safety and related issues. Designated NGO representatives will have to fill in a questionnaire that will facilitate the nomination process.

### **Workshop target groups and participants**

The target groups were environmental NGO's, decision makers, researchers and authorities in Russia. At the same time the workshop theme stimulated great interest among target groups in other EECCA countries. Thus stakeholders from nine EECCA countries took part in the workshop: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

Eco-Accord received more than 50 applications from the EECCA NGOs. Unfortunately limited resources didn't allow the organizers to invite all people who expressed interest in the theme of the workshop. Thus only 27 NGO representatives were invited.

In total the workshop was attended by 50 people. Among them there were representatives from Armenia (3); Azerbaijan (2); Belarus (3); Georgia (1); Kazakhstan (1); Kyrgyzstan (2); Moldova (4); Russia (26); Sweden (1); Uzbekistan (1); Ukraine (1); and USA (1).

Among the EECCA participants there were: 24 women and 20 men; 27 NGO representatives; 7 representatives of scientific and research institutes; 7 representatives of the public authorities; and 3 business representatives.

## Workshop agenda

The workshop consisted of two days. The first day was devoted to the survey of chemical management policy of POPs and other chemicals in the Russian Federation prepared by Eco-Accord and to the issues of harmonization of legislation of chemicals management in Russia and the EU. The introduction was made by *Christina Rudén*, Swedish Royal Institute of Technology, who made a presentation on precaution in chemicals management.

The following presentations were focused on the Russian policy in the sphere of protection of the environment and human health from adverse impacts of hazardous chemicals. These presentations were made by well known experts from the Russian governmental structures, scientific institutes and NGOs.

1. Changes in the Russian legislation in connection with the Law on Technical Regulation
2. Development of voluntary certification of chemical industry of Russia and its integration into international programs such as Responsible Care and REACH
3. Environmental safety of Russian chemical industry
4. Russian Chemicals Legislation and future of Khimpron Joint Stock Company (Novocheboksarsk)
5. Laws and regulations of Russia in the sphere of protection of the environment and human health from adverse impacts of hazardous chemicals
6. Modern approaches to classification of toxicity and hazards of chemicals
7. Russian chemicals regulations to address double standards: barriers against old technologies transfer and products containing dangerous substances
8. Major chemical safety problems in Russia and environmental enforcement issues
9. PCBs and ways of elimination
10. Addressing issues of obsolete pesticide stockpiles in Russia based on ACAP-CIP Project outcomes

After lunch issues of harmonization of legislation of chemicals management were discussed. Presentations were devoted to the new EU chemical management legislation (REACH) and possibilities of its harmonisation with the national legislations in Russia and other EECCA countries. Special focus was made on the requirements for safety information and to the new technical regulations in Russia as the options for harmonisation of Russian and international standards

The following issues were discussed:

- More intensive introduction of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 standards, transition to the uniform ISO 19011:2002 standard;
- Establishment of barriers to prevent entry of environmentally hazardous technologies and goods to the Russian market and other EECCA markets;
- Prevention of import of Russian and other EECCA products, that were produced with application of environmentally hazardous technologies, to the EU market;

- Gradual elimination of such institutions as sanitary protection zones and hazardous occupational conditions in the EECCA;
- Assessment of cumulative health impacts of internal and external exposure to POPs;
- Study of POPs with unknown properties.

Problems to accept REACH in the EECCA were identified:

- Lack of an authorised national body with a definite structure and objectives that would co-ordinate REACH introduction activities at the national level.
- The EECCA countries lack officially approved translations of the international criteria of sufficiency and conformity for hygiene and toxicological assessments of chemicals and risk assessments.
- Insufficient research capacity, organised according to principles of GLP, ISO 17025
- Lack of a National Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals
- Expensive toxicological testing, e.g. assessment of one toxicology parameter may entail costs of \$5,000 -20,000 US dollars.
- An associated problem: many producers are unwilling and cannot afford costs of research, assessments and registration of their chemicals.
- Inadequate numbers of trained specialists (experts) with international accreditation in the sphere of toxicological, hygiene and epidemiological data assessment, risks assessments and risk interpretation.
- Shortage of analytical equipment (e.g. the Public Health Ministry of the Republic of Belarus has 2 gas chromatography units with mass-spectrometry detection, 8 HRLCs, and about 50 GCs)
- Shortage of quality assurance systems with 17025 accreditation and validation data collected under proficiency testing procedures.

The second day of the workshop was focused on the role of NGOs in achieving the Stockholm Convention goals and the 2020 goal of the toxic free future expressed in SAICM. The following main issues were addressed:

- NGOs promotion of the use of the precautionary principle
- NGO Role in the Development of SAICM
- EECCA NGO participation in addressing issues of the sound chemicals management.

Special focus was made on the EECCA NGO activities in the frame of IPEP. More than 15 presentations describing the outcomes of the most interesting IPEP projects in the EECCA were made.

In the end of the workshop all participants gave their comments to the draft of the workshop recommendations. All comments were incorporated into the final version of the recommendations.

## **Workshop recommendations**

Recommendations for improvement of the Russian legislation in the sphere of regulation of chemical substances were prepared and discussed by the workshop participants. In

particular, these recommendations call Russian authorities to ensure integration of chemical safety issues into governmental development strategies, programs and plans; to ratify international environmental treaties on chemical safety and ensure efficient public participation in their implementation; to guarantee transparency of finance flows from international financial institutions and donor countries for elimination of toxic chemicals, and search for safer alternatives.

The draft of the recommendations was broadly disseminated via the Eco-Accord information service. In addition, a special internet discussion list was formed (chemicals2005@yahogroups.com) which provided the draft of the recommendations to those NGOs and other stakeholders who expressed interest in adding comments and suggestions. The draft of the recommendations was also disseminated via Eco-Accord's news service with more than 2500 subscribers throughout the EECCA region. As a result more than 150 people provided their input aimed at improving the draft of the recommendations. The final version shown in Annex 1.

### **Workshop evaluation form**

At the end of the workshop an evaluation form was disseminated among the workshop participants. It was aimed at receiving answers to a number of questions necessary to reveal the importance of presentations made by Swedish colleagues. The evaluation form proved the need of such workshops and the importance of presentations made during the meeting.

### **EECCA NGO expert group**

As an outcome of the workshop, an EECCA NGO Expert Team was formed to work on a variety of environment and health issues. The Expert Team is ready to provide adequate services to non-profit partners in the EECCA and around the world. A questionnaire aimed to facilitate the nomination process was disseminated among the workshop participants and beyond using the Eco-Accord POPs information network.

After thorough evaluation of the feed back we received based on the answers to the questionnaire, 10 people were included on the expert team from around the EECCA region. They can provide information and help in different spheres related to chemical safety, in particular in strengthening cooperation and partnership between NGOs, business and public authorities; building NGO networks on issues of chemical safety; working out policy papers on chemicals management; working on NIPs to the Stockholm convention; strengthening the NGO role in the development of pollutant release and transfer registers; organizing campaigns against chemical pollution; sustainable waste management and zero waste approach; etc.

### **Acknowledgements**

After the workshop Eco-Accord received 15 letters from the workshop participants in which they expressed their gratitude to the sponsors and organizers of this event. They all confirmed their interest in the materials presented at the workshop and a strong willingness to participate in similar events in the future.



# Annex 1. Recommendations for Improvement of the Chemical Management Policies of the Russian Federation

Participants of the seminar "Health and Environmental Impacts of Toxic Chemicals: Chemical Management Policies of Russia and EU Countries" called on the Russian State Duma and [Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation](#):

- to consider the issue of swift ratification of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on Procedures of Prior Informed Consent on Some Hazardous Chemical and Pesticides in International Trade, and PRTR Protocol to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters;
- to ensure efficient public participation in activities associated with implementation of international conventions and treaties on chemical security - in development of policies, laws and regulations, specific plans, programs and projects. It is necessary to ensure timely provision of full information to all interested public groups, to provide them opportunities to express their views and to ensure accounting for these views in decision-making. It is very important to incorporate public representatives into working groups, councils and official delegations on relevant problems.

Accounting for the need to improve legislative regulation of activities in the sphere of management of hazardous chemicals, workshop participants call on the Russian government:

- to ensure in 2006 full-scale incorporation of chemical safety issues to the middle-term and long-term strategies of social and economic development of the Russian Federation;
- to guarantee transparency of finance flows of international finance institutions and donor countries for purposes of elimination of toxic chemicals, including POPs, and their stockpiles, for rehabilitation of contaminated areas and development of environmentally safe alternatives.
- to facilitate review and approval of draft Federal Laws "On Status of Environmental Disaster Zones and Regulation of Economic and Other Activities at their Territories", "On Ensuring Safe Use of Chemicals";
- to promote tightening of economic limitations and requirements to economic activities by new technical regulations that are being developed pursuant to Federal Law on Technical Regulation.
- taking into account that the effective legislative acts and standards pertaining to management of used packaging and packaging materials are outdated, are not duly organised and are not harmonised with relevant international laws and standards, it is important to develop a new legislative framework, necessary for development of sources of financing for systems of collection and processing of used packaging (as an integral component of market infrastructure).
- to develop and approve a series of new technical regulations, pertaining to use of packaging and packaging materials, namely "On Labelling of Food Products"



(that should meet requirements of EU Directives), including "On Signs and Marking of Food Products Allowing to Identify a Batch", "On Labelling Food Products, Including Their Nutrition Value", "On Signs for Materials and Items that Contact with Food Products", "On Safe Handling at the Consumer Food Market", "Packaging and Marking of Pharmaceuticals", "On Packaging, Marking, Transportation and Use of Chemicals and Chemical Mixtures", "On turnover and utilisation of Packaging", "On Safe Handling at the Consumer Non-food Market: Production, Storage, Transportation and Sale Processes", "On Safe Handling at the Consumer Food Market: Production, Storage, Transportation and Sale Processes" "On Integrated Pollution Control" (the latter one should incorporate development of technical documentation on BATs).

- besides that, it is necessary to provide legal and legislative support to facilities that operate biological wastewater treatment facilities and provide relevant services to municipal authorities (e.g. setting rates of fees for discharges in excess of limits, particularly in the case of non-biodegradable substances). Now, there is the only a document that regulates wastewater discharges to biological wastewater treatment facilities - a contract between two economic actors. These contracts do not meet requirements of Law on Environmental Protection. The due Rules of the Russian Federation (the Rules of Operation of Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Systems No. 167 of 12.02.99) do not stipulate environmental requirements to wastewater discharges and associated limits.

Taking into account the importance of activities in Russia aimed at an inventory of POPs in the frame of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs we call the Russian government:

- to promote active public involvement in spotting unauthorized storage of obsolete and banned pesticides containing POPs;
- to include data received by public organizations in regional and national data bases on inventory of obsolete pesticide stockpiles as an additional source of information;
- to promote public participation in spotting additional sources of PCB contaminated equipment on the territories of industrial enterprises;
- to include data received by public organizations into regional and national data bases of inventories of PCBs as an additional source of information

Welcoming activities of the Government of the Russian Federation for development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management with the aim to achieve by the year 2020, a toxic-free future in which food, water, and air do not contain chemical pollutants having the potential to cause harm to human health and the environment, and in which workers and communities no longer receive occupational or community exposure or injury caused by these chemicals, we recommend:

- to mobilise national resources to achieve objectives of the Strategic Approach to international regulation of chemicals;
- beginning immediately, and at the latest by 2020, to phase out the production and use of chemicals that are persistent or bio-accumulative, or that are carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic to reproduction or endocrine disruptors, or are of equivalent concern, with the aim of their eventual elimination;

- to cease all releases (gaseous, liquid or solid; deliberate or accidental) and losses of these chemicals to the environment by 2020;
- to follow the precautionary principle, under which preventive measures are to be taken when there are reasonable grounds for concern, even when the evidence is inconclusive of a causal relationship between an activity and its effects;
- to guarantee default right-to-know to citizens that encompasses full information about all chemicals, including chemicals in products, data on their intrinsic properties and their effects on human health and environment, and information on their alternatives;
- to intensify the development of pollutant release and transfer registers at local, regional and national levels;
- to ensure access to information on chemical security issues, including by use of existing NGO networks;
- to apply the substitution principle ensuring that hazardous chemicals, products and processes are replaced with safe alternatives, building upon the Stockholm Convention;
- to guarantee practical application of the “polluter pays” principle and economic responsibility for the damage and negative impact on the environment and human health;
- to ensure an effective approach for ensuring corporate liability and compensations, particularly in identifying and holding appropriate parties responsible for damage to human health and the environment;
- to promote further development of monitoring programs, measurements and state, municipal and public control of pollution sources (stacks, discharge pipes, transfer of pollutants, etc.); to control background pollution levels in all environmental media and in biological objects;
- to tighten control of different chemical production stages at state-run and private facilities;
- to develop the Russian Chemical Cadastre with information on chemicals or waste, their production, use and storage

Russian citizens are particularly concerned by growing expansion of "dirty" technologies from other countries, particularly:

- waste incinerators - in 5 recent years discussions on construction of waste incineration plants were periodically initiated in several Russian cities (Volgograd, Chelyabinsk, Kovrov, Murom, Rostov-on-Don, Severodvinsk, St.Petersburg, Sochi, Stavropol, Taganrog);
- modernisation, reconstruction and capacity enhancement of already operational PVC plants and construction of new ones (production of PVC-based linoleum, films, wallpaper, food packaging, etc)

As a result, the workshop participants believe that it is necessary:

- to introduce mandatory public notification on planned construction of waste incineration plants (with provision of comprehensive information on waste incineration technologies);

- to incorporate representatives of the general public and NGOs into working groups and commissions, that assess economic feasibility and environmental acceptability of proposed waste-elimination technologies;
- to disseminate good western practices in the sphere of waste separation and recycle;
- to support development of no-waste production technologies, environmentally sound waste processing and recycling technologies