



## **International POPs Elimination Project**

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

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# **Public information campaign to lobby for Stockholm Convention ratification by Kyrgyzstan**

## **Independent Environment Assessment and Partnership Initiative Coalition**

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## 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 summary, full report in Russian

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## Summary

In the course of the project implementation we have established a network of NGOs seeking to protect public environmental rights. The network incorporates 30 NGOs from different regions of the country. Experts developed background analytical materials on the presence and health impacts of POPs in every oblast of the country. Members of the network developed a strategy for a lobbying campaign in favour of ratification of the Stockholm Convention. In the framework of the information campaign we planned to conduct roundtables and meetings with Members of Parliament (MPs) and representatives of Ministries and Agencies. Mainstream activities incorporated two key activity directions: communication events and the information campaign. The campaign was successful; On June 13, 2006, *Zhogorky Kenesh* (the Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic decided to ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

## Communication events

### Report on the roundtable of 14.03.06

On March 14, 2006, a roundtable discussion was organised and held in Bishkek. The roundtable was attended by representatives of international organisations, governmental authorities and NGOs (28 persons in total). As handouts, the roundtable participants were provided the IPEN Declaration for a Toxic-Free Future.

The roundtable incorporated:

- Presentations
- General discussion

In the introductory part of the roundtable discussion, the facilitator made a brief introduction to the aims and objectives of the roundtable. Then, presentations were made.

In her report - the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - I.Konyukhova described major highlights of the Convention, which seeks to eliminate production and application of some of the most toxic chemicals in the world.

In her report, N.S. Vashneva told the participants that Kyrgyzstan's ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to natural and industrial impacts and the problem of POPs environmental pollution is especially relevant for the country. Favourable natural conditions in valleys of Kyrgyzstan promoted cultivation of valuable crops there, including cotton, tobacco, sugar beets, corn, etc. As a result, in the Soviet period, large land areas were used for monoculture crops: cotton in Ferganskaya valley, tobacco in Talasskaya valley, sugar beets in Chuiskaya valley.

In order to get high crop yields, agrochemicals were intensively applied including herbicides, insecticides, defoliants, plant growth stimulators and different mineral fertilisers. In late 1980s, pesticides were applied on about 1 million hectares of cultivated land in the republic on crops

including cotton, sugar beets, vegetables, tobacco, cereals, vineyards, pastures, fruit gardens. About 5,000 tons of pesticides were used for these purposes and about 30% of them were POPs-containing pesticide preparations. The intensity of pesticide application peaked in the 1970s - 1980s. At that time, loads of organochlorine pesticides reached more than 10 kg/hectare. Generally, pesticide loads per hectare of cultivated land reached 5 kg.

As a result, pesticides accumulate in soil, then they enter agriculture products and forage, and finally by food chains they may enter a human body. Besides that, persistent organic pollutants infiltrate to soil and may be washed by surface drain to water bodies. It is important to note that, due to shortages of drinking water, residents of the country (particularly residents of southern districts) have to use polluted water from irrigation channels for drinking and household purposes.

In his report, O. Pechenyuk listed reasons that necessitate acceleration of the process of ratification of the Stockholm Convention. Then, the roundtable participants posed questions to speakers.

In the course of discussions, the roundtable participants decided to sign a letter to *Toraga* of *Zhogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic (speaker of the parliament; see Annex 1) urging him to facilitate ratification of the Stockholm Convention. The letter will be submitted to *Toraga* on March 17, 2006 in the course of roundtable "On the Need to Ratify the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants" with participation of MPs.

## **Report on the roundtable of 17.03.06**

On March 17, 2006, the second roundtable was organised and conducted in the building of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic. The event was co-financed by F. Ebert Fund.

The roundtable proceeding were attended by representatives of the Administration of *Zhogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic, MPs, representatives of governmental bodies, international organisations and NGOs (30 persons in total). The roundtable participants were provided the IPEN Declaration for a Toxic-Free Future and hard copies of presentations.

The roundtable proceedings incorporated:

- Presentations
- General discussion

In the introductory part of the roundtable discussion, the facilitator made a brief introduction to aims and objectives of the roundtable. After the introduction, presentations were made.

In her report - the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - I.Konyukhova described major highlights of the Convention that seeks to eliminate production and application of the most toxic chemicals in the World.

In her report, L.V. Shteinke said that strategic aims of environmental policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the sphere of control and application of hazardous chemicals (including POPs) are associated with protection of the environment and health of the current generation and future generations from adverse impact of these chemicals. The Stockholm Convention stipulates

provision of finance and technical assistance of developed countries to transition economies. Principles and commitments of the Stockholm Convention formed the backbone of the National Implementation Plan of the Stockholm Convention in Kyrgyzstan.

The National Implementation Plan (NIP) of the Stockholm Convention seeks to minimise and eliminate POPs. The NIP will establish a national system of safe chemicals management, stipulating mandatory application of precautionary measures, preventive measures and comprehensive pollution control in the framework of environmental monitoring, raising public environmental awareness, promotion of public support of environmental programs, development of necessary technical and research capacity.

M.E. Bekkoenov presented video-materials on persistent organic pollutants.

In his report, O. Pechenyuk listed reasons that necessitate acceleration of the process of ratification of the Stockholm Convention. The Stockholm Convention on POPs seeks to ensure complete elimination of 12 chemicals, referred to unofficially to as "the dirty dozen". These toxic chemicals are associated with cancer and suppression of human immune and reproductive systems. These chemicals pose major threats to wildlife as well. They damage ecosystems and poison living organisms. These pesticides and industrial chemicals do not recognise international borders. They are stable (i.e. they can exist in the environment for a long time) and migrate to distant countries, located far away from places of their initial application.

After presentations, the roundtable participants asked questions.

In the course of the general discussion, the roundtable participants came to the conclusion on the urgent need to ratify the Stockholm Convention. Relevant parliamentary committees of *Zhogorku Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic will actively promote ratification of the Stockholm Convention.

## **Report on the roundtable of 14.04.06**

On April 14, 2006, a roundtable was organised in Karakol (the roundtable was co-financed by F. Ebert Fund). The roundtable was attended by representatives of the State Administration of Issykkulskaya Oblast, sanitary and epidemiological services, as well as NGOs of Issykkulskaya and Narynskaya oblasts (29 persons in total). Participants of the roundtable were provided reports on the need to ratify the Stockholm Convention.

The roundtable proceedings incorporated:

- Presentations
- General discussion

In the introductory part of the roundtable discussion, the facilitator made a brief introduction to aims and objectives of the roundtable. After the introduction, presentations were made.

In his report - the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - V. Bortsov noted that the Stockholm Convention is an international treaty, signed on May 22, 2001. The Convention seeks to protect human health and the environment from adverse impacts of persistent organic pollutants. The Convention pursues 5 key objectives:

- Elimination of hazardous POPs, initially starting from elimination of 12 particularly toxic ones;
- Promoting transition to safer alternatives;
- Identification of additional POPs for application of relevant measures;
- Elimination of accumulated POPs stockpiles and POPs-contaminated equipment;
- Joint actions for a future without POPs.

Kyrgyzstan signed the Convention on May 17, 2002. Since that time, GEF/UNEP project "Supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs" was implemented in the country.

In the framework of the latter project:

- the national capacity for implementation of the Stockholm Convention was assessed;
- preliminary inventories of POPs were conducted;
- the infrastructure for POPs management was improved;
- opportunities to fulfil commitments under the Stockholm Convention were assessed and the National Implementation Plan was developed.

The second presentation - POPs Health Impacts and Prevention Options - was based on data supplied by the Public Health Ministry of the Kyrgyz Republic. The report included information on the amounts of POPs-containing waste in public health facilities and analysed health impacts of POPs in different regions of the country. Data analysis suggests that incidence of POPs-induced health problems tend to decrease every consecutive year, but relevant morbidity shares still remain rather high. The report described options to address the situation, including development of analytical capacity in the country and public information.

In his presentation - the Need to Ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs - T. Kydyrbaev, the leader of "Baisoorun" NGO noted that ratification of the Convention would allow the country to participate in the next Conference of Parties as a voting Party and apply for financial and technical assistance from developed countries that ratified the Convention.

T. Kydyrbaev noted that if we fail to ratify the Convention rather quickly we could lose opportunities of associated assistance.

The Convention on POPs helps to cease application of hazardous chemicals. The Convention stipulates that wealthy countries should eliminate their POPs stockpiles themselves. Equally important, the Convention requires wealthy countries to provide technical and finance assistance to poorer Parties of the Convention, allowing them to eliminate toxic chemicals and switch to application of safer alternatives.

Then, the roundtable participants asked questions and started the general discussion. They discussed many relevant problems - in particular, they noted that laboratories that identified and eliminated POPs in the Soviet period now have no funds even for purchase of standard samples. The majority of such laboratories lack modern equipment allowing identification of POPs.

The roundtable participants expressed their view that the country cannot address POPs-related problems alone as it lacks necessary funds to address it.

All participants of the roundtable unanimously agreed that the country should ratify the Stockholm Convention in the nearest future, as the ratification will be obviously beneficial. Besides that, international commitments of Kyrgyzstan after ratification of the Convention would allow the country to get rid of the most toxic chemicals and switch to application of safer alternatives, with finance and technical assistance of developed countries.

## **Report on the roundtable of 19.05.06**

On May 19, 2006, a roundtable was organised and conducted in Osh. The roundtable proceedings were attended by representatives of international organisations, governmental bodies and NGOs (30 persons in total). The roundtable participants were provided the IPEN Declaration for a Toxic-Free Future and hard copies of presentations.

The roundtable proceedings incorporated:

- Presentations
- General discussion

In the introductory part of the roundtable discussion, the facilitator made a brief introduction to aims and objectives of the roundtable. After the introduction, presentations were made.

In her report - the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants - I.Konyukhova described major highlights of the Convention, that seeks to eliminate production and application of some of the most toxic chemicals in the world. Persistent organic pollutants incorporate a rather broad range of chemicals. Some of them are used in economic activities, notwithstanding their toxicity, while other POPs are generated as by-products of industrial processes.

M.E. Bekkoenov presented video-materials on persistent organic pollutants. He noted that Kyrgyzstan's ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to natural and industrial impacts. Favourable natural conditions in valleys of Kyrgyzstan promoted cultivation of valuable crops there, including cotton, tobacco, sugar beets, corn, etc. As a result, in the Soviet period, large land areas were used for monoculture crops: cotton in Ferganskaya valley, tobacco in Talasskaya valley, sugar beets in Chuiskaya valley.

In order to get high crop yields, agrochemicals were intensively applied including herbicides, insecticides, defoliants, plant growth stimulators and different mineral fertilisers. As a result, pesticides accumulate in soil, than they enter agriculture products and forage, and finally by food chains they may enter a human body. Besides that, persistent organic pollutants infiltrate to soil and may be washed by surface drain to water bodies.

It is important to note that due to shortages of drinking water, residents of the country (particularly residents of southern districts) have to use polluted water from irrigation channels for drinking and household purposes. Storages of obsolete pesticides and looted POPs burial sites pose major health and environmental hazards.

In her report, L.Stcherbakova discussed reasons to accelerate the process of ratification of the Stockholm Convention. The ratification will be beneficial for all countries. Toxic chemicals that are regulated by the Convention can migrate in the environment. They do not recognise international borders. They can be transferred by water and air currents and poison people and

the environment for a long time after their initial environmental release. The more countries ratify the Convention, the more countries will be able to get rid of these toxic chemicals and that will be beneficial for all.

I. Konyukhova described opportunities for computer experts for a broad public information campaign on persistent organic pollutants, referring to practical experience of such web-sites as [www.expertise.caresd.net](http://www.expertise.caresd.net) and [www.pops.kg](http://www.pops.kg)

Then, the roundtable participants asked questions. In the course of the discussion, the roundtable participants proposed to establish agro-service centres to inform farmers of application of pesticides and alternative methods and to implement actions for raising public awareness of POPs hazards.

After completion of the series of roundtable discussions, dedicated to the need to ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs, NGOs organised and conducted similar roundtables in different regions of the country. Seeking to protect their rights for safe and healthy environment, residents of all regions of our country supported the need to ratify the Stockholm Convention.

## **The information campaign**

The information campaign was also subdivided into 2 components: Information dissemination by mailing lists and posting information materials at web-sites. We regularly disseminate information on POPs-related problems by mass media outlets, electronic information mailing services in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, CIS and other countries, and update relevant information materials, posted at web-sites [www.expertise.caresd.net](http://www.expertise.caresd.net), [www.pops.kg](http://www.pops.kg), [www.caresd.net](http://www.caresd.net).

In addition, we posted the IPEN Declaration, letters of interest, reports and information releases on roundtable discussions conducted at web-site [www.expertise.caresd.net](http://www.expertise.caresd.net).

Co-operation with mass media outlets occurred by development of information press-kits for journalists, organisation of interviews and topical broadcasts. Information releases and four topical articles on POPs were published in printed media outlets, topical radio and TV broadcasts were aired.

On May 17, 2006 a press conference was held in AKI press information agency on matters associated with the Day of the Stockholm Convention. The Stockholm Convention represents a major global step that was made to reverse poisoning of global ecosystems and people at the planet. Kyrgyzstan signed the Convention on May 17, 2002 and now the country is at the stage of its ratification.

The press conference was organised by IPEN (the International POPs Elimination Network), the Public Health Ministry of Kyrgyzstan, "Independent Environmental Assessment" NGO, GEF/UNEP project "Supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in Development of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs" and the Network for Protection of Public Environmental Interests of the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, representatives of NGOs of Talasskaya Oblast also participated in the press conference.



AKIpress - Kyrgyz environmentalists call for ratification of the Convention for reduction of persistent organic pollutants

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Society, health  
11:21 17-05-2006

**Kyrgyz environmentalists call for ratification of the Convention for reduction of persistent organic pollutants**

BISHKEK (AKIpress) - Environmentalists of Kyrgyzstan call for ratification of the Stockholm Convention. Vitaliy Bortsov, a member of "Independent Environmental Assessment" NGO made a relevant statement today, on May 17, 2006, at the press conference in AKIpress agency.

V. Bortsov said that Kyrgyzstan signed the Stockholm Convention on May 17, 2002. The Convention seeks to reduce global levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Environmentalists hope that MPs will ratify the convention before the parliamentary vacations.

The highest POPs levels in Kyrgyzstan are observed in the South of the country, where tobacco and cotton plantations are located. According to V. Bortsov, a particularly serious risk for human health is posed by former pesticide storage facilities in the South of the country that were operational in the Soviet period. Now, due to lack of responsible management, local residents looted these facilities and use construction materials for their households. However, population surveys suggest that only 5% of residents are aware of POPs-associated hazards.

POPs pose major health risks as they accumulate in a human body and induce cancer and cardiovascular disorders. In addition, V. Bortsov noted that POPs accumulate in soil and enter a human body with food.

According to V. Bortsov, ratification of the Convention would allow development of underlying laws and regulations for POPs management, storage and eventual elimination. He said: "Environmentalists hope that, with support of the international community, works will be made in the South of the country in order to bury/eliminate POPs and to establish a laboratory that would be able to conduct research and estimate POPs levels in soil and food products".

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## **17/05 17:34 Environmentalists identified zones of high concentrations of pesticides in Kyrgyzstan**

**Bishkek, May 17 - IA "24.kg", Andrei TOKOMBAEV.** Independent environmentalists identified zones of high concentrations of pesticides, as Vitaliy Bortsov (PR manager of "Independent Environmental Assessment" NGO) told IA "24.kg" today.

He said that the study was conducted in the framework of the international project seeking to assist the Kyrgyz Republic in development of the National Implementation Plan of the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

According to the project participants, the highest threats to the environment and health of the country's residents are posed by toxic chemicals, identified in soil and groundwater in the South of the country, in Narynskaya Oblast and in the mountainous Lake Son-Kul.

In particular, Vitaliy Bortsov said that a large amount of pesticides was discharged to the Son-Kul Lake in 1976. Now, the environmentalists found these pesticides in bottom sediments (food for a commercial fish species).

The environmentalist said that two years ago a pesticide storage facility with aldrin was looted in Dzalal-Abadskaya Oblast. Some time later, more than 20 persons suffered aldrin poisoning in nearby villages and one child even died. Now, high levels of aldrin were registered at cultivated land areas, located nearby the storage.

In addition, V. Bortsov noted that pesticide releases were registered at pesticide burial sites in Dzalal-Abadskaya and Narynskaya oblasts. The NGO Chairman said that: "Some estimates suggest that these chemicals infiltrated to groundwater, posing a threat of a large-scale poisoning".

He noted also, that pesticides might exist in soil and water for an indefinitely long time.

He explained: "These toxic chemicals belong to the group of so called persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Their neutralisation would require major costs. Therefore, it would be easier to implement relevant activities in the framework of international Stockholm Convention on POPs. The country signed the Convention in 2002. However, the national legislation of Kyrgyzstan has not been harmonised with the Convention yet".

According to V. Bortsov, now, "Independent Environmental Assessment" NGO, the International POPs Elimination Network, the GEF project, UNEP and the Network for Protection of Public Environmental Interests of the Kyrgyz Republic intend to induce MPs to introduce necessary amendments to the relevant legislation before the parliamentary vacations. In essence, such a step would mean ratification of the Stockholm Convention on POPs by Kyrgyzstan.

In May, "Independent Environmental Assessment" NGO signed a co-operation agreement with GEF/UNEP project "Supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in Development of the National Implementation Plan of the Stockholm Convention on POPs" on broad information coverage of the process of preparations to ratification of the Stockholm Convention by the Kyrgyz Republic.

In the framework of the information campaign, signatures were collected in support of ratification of the Stockholm Convention. About 1500 signatures were submitted to *Toraga of Zhogorky Kenesh* of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On June 13, 2006, *Zhogorky Kenesh* (the Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic decided to ratify the Stockholm Convention on POPs. The decision was substantially promoted by a large number of signatures, submitted to *Toraga of Zhogorky Kenesh*, members of relevant parliamentary committees and territorial groups. It was a decisive step, made to materialise human rights for safe and healthy environment for the contemporary generation and generations to come. These developments show that the country is ready to join the group of countries that have already ratified the Stockholm Convention, that the country is ready to fulfil its international commitments under the Convention. Further ratification proceedings are mainly of procedural nature and represent essentially a question of time.

NGOs of the Network for Protection of Public Environmental Interests of the Kyrgyz Republic made a major contribution to implementation of the information campaign for ratification of the Stockholm Convention (ITCS Human Rights Centre, "Baicoorun", Talas SBDC consult, "Eco-Oi", "Zheti-Ken-Consulting", "Eco-Demilge"). Besides that, assistance was provided also by specialists of the State Agency for Environment and Forestry, the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Supervisory Agency of the Public Health Ministry of Kyrgyzstan, MPs of Kyrgyzstan and CARNet Information Network.

The above organisations organised the information campaign for ratification of the Stockholm Convention in all regions of the country.

Follow up activities should be focused on improvement of inter-agency and inter-sectoral co-operation in the framework of development and implementation of the National Plan of Implementation of the Stockholm Convention.

The launch of the current project substantially accelerated many processes associated with preparations to ratification of the Stockholm Convention by Kyrgyzstan.

## **Annex 1**

**To: Mr. Sultanov M.A.**  
***Toraga of Zhogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic***

**Dear Marat Abdyrazakovich,**

In the period of independence, the Kyrgyz Republic has implemented some measures to enhance the efficiency of state environmental management, to develop underlying laws and regulations of environmental management. National environmental programs are under way and they are closely integrated with relevant socio-economic strategies. The republic actively participates in international, subregional, regional and bilateral co-operation and it is a party of 13 international environmental conventions.

Accounting for global and national environmental developments, in May 2002, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic signed the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), confirming that Kyrgyzstan seeks to participate in addressing environmental problems of local and global significance that adversely affect health and environment.

International practical experience suggests that the problem of POPs elimination and minimisation cannot be efficiently addressed by an individual developed country. Moreover, it cannot be efficiently addressed by bilateral or even regional agreements. It is necessary to apply joint efforts of all countries, rich and poor, to address the problem of POPs, as the problem is associated with their acute toxicity for wildlife and human beings, huge accumulated stockpiles and unique physical and chemical properties of POPs.

Persistent organic pollutants are stable; they may migrate in the environment to large distances, accumulate in tissues of plants and animals and adversely affect human health and the environment.

Kyrgyzstan's ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to natural and industrial impacts and the problem of POPs environmental pollution is especially relevant for the country.

Strategic aims of environmental policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the sphere of control and application of hazardous chemicals (including POPs) are associated with protection of the environment and health of the current generation and future generations from their adverse impacts. The Stockholm Convention stipulates provision of finance and technical assistance of developed countries to transition economies.

In the course of preliminary inventory of former storages facilities of collective and state farms, agricultural aviation facilities, 104,683 kg of obsolete pesticides were identified, including 31,851 kg of POPs-pesticides. According to results of these preliminary inventories, the share of POPs-pesticides reaches 20.68% of the overall stockpiles of obsolete pesticides identified. Results of the preliminary inventory suggest the need to identify unknown pesticides or pesticide mixtures of unknown composition (about 20.68% of the overall amount of obsolete pesticides - 21,647 kg (l). It is particularly important to estimate the share of POPs-pesticides that might be found among unknown pesticides. It is necessary to note that actual amounts of obsolete pesticides might substantially exceed results of the inventory works, as private farming facilities

may store such pesticides and pesticide preparations are illegally delivered to the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic from neighbouring countries.

Accounting for the need to ensure safe life and health of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, we kindly ask you to facilitate ratification of the Stockholm Convention and its further implementation into the national legislation.