

**FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009

Agenda item 6. Chemicals

Keynote address by the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management¹

Distinguished delegates,

The process led by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) are clearly linked with each other.

Therefore I sincerely believe that the CSD process, with its acclaimed global policy making role, especially in its 2010-2011 cycle, which includes chemicals as one of its thematic areas, may largely influence the minds of the national policy makers and help to give an impetus to place the chemicals high on the national and international agenda. The outcomes of the forthcoming cycle should to a great extent contribute to achieving significant progress in the overall SAICM implementation. I would like to underline that the CSD and SAICM process can mutually reinforce each other, without duplication of efforts. In this context it may constitute an important step in building synergies towards the achievement of the objectives of sound chemicals management by 2020.

I believe that all the countries within the CEE region has developed significantly in the recent years, almost in every aspect. However, the CEE region is a unique composition of states. One of its characteristics is for example that no major donor country stems from this region. Part of the countries has joined the European Union few years ago, some will do so in the future, but a considerable part has chosen a different way of cooperation. Nevertheless sound chemicals management is an issue for the whole region, as chemicals know no boundaries. Taking under consideration arguments stated above, close cooperation of all countries in the region is essential to achieve sound chemicals management. The major challenge for the region in relation to the SAICM implementation seems to be the need to secure sustainable long-term financial resources.

The question remains – how to cooperate successfully on the issue of chemicals in such a mosaic of states?

There is no single solution, but from my point of view, universal mainstreaming of chemicals is a prerequisite to achieve sound chemicals management at national but also at subnational, regional and global level. Especially region such differentiated as CEE would largely benefit from successful applying of mainstreaming in the national policies of the countries of the region. Therefore I sincerely believe that if the Commission expresses the need to mainstream chemicals management in development strategies and assistance it will be of the utmost importance for the successful implementation of overall SAICM goal. Without the development and implementation of relevant laws, policies, and appropriate institutions, sound chemicals management will be extremely difficult, if not even impossible.

¹ The text is presented as received from the author.

Finally, I would like to underline that CEE region is striving to actively cooperate and play more visible role in relation to the chemicals issues. Two SAICM regional meetings have already been held, in 2007 in Latvia and in 2008 In Romania. Next regional meeting will be held just next week in Lodz, Poland. In order to achieve the higher degree of cooperation within a region, a steering body, Regional Coordination Group, has been established. I believe that these regional meetings and coordination mechanisms played and will continue to play an important role in enabling regional stakeholders to exchange experience and identify priority needs in relation to implementation of the Strategic Approach, developing regional positions on key issues and will contribute to the success of the sustainable development in the Region.