

## **ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Group of Experts on Monitoring of Radioactively Contaminated Scrap Metal

Second session

Geneva, 12-14 June 2006

Agenda Item 4

**Presentation by: Ms. Deborah Kopsick, US Environment Protection Agency**

### **Title: UNITED STATES UPDATE REPORT ON MONITORING OF SCRAP METAL FOR RADIOACTIVITY**

The United States is continuing its efforts to prevent the loss of radiation sources, thereby reducing the amount of scrap metal and associated facilities from becoming contaminated with radiation. There has been an increasing amount of scrap metal crossing international borders, yet there is still a lack of adequate and effective monitoring at many facilities. The U.S. has imported more than 14 million metric tons of scrap metal in 2005, with at least two significant radioactive sources being found in this material. The U.S. has also exported 18 million metric tons of scrap metal in 2005. The United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Orphan Source Initiative is addressing this problem in a number of ways, including providing guidance and training to the demolition and scrap processing industries, researching non-radioactive gauge and device alternatives and tracking radioactive materials with radiofrequency identification while in transit.

To directly combat the issue of contaminated scrap metal imports, the USEPA has monitored over 7,000,000 metric tons of metal using grapple-mounted detectors at two U.S. seaports. The decision of where to monitor is critical to finding radioactive sources. An U.S. study has shown that it is extremely difficult to locate a radioactive source if it is shielded by greater than 20 inches of shredded metal. Therefore a more systematic and thorough approach to metal monitoring would enhance the chances of finding unwanted radioactive materials and prevent an inadvertent contamination. As international trade increases, the need for a standardized international monitoring protocol increases. The U.S. supports the efforts of the UNECE to develop international recommendations, increase communications between countries and provide training to successfully implement these recommendations.