



# Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Twenty-seventh Issue of **REN NEWSFLASH!**

Highlights in this issue:

- The 4<sup>th</sup> REN annual workshop held in Bangkok
- Border Dialogue strengthens control of ODS trade and transit between Thailand and Lao PDR
- Basel Convention Questionnaires on transit issues
- Waste crime: couple fined for illegal exports; Man sentenced to prison

*REN Newsflash, a monthly newsletter, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities and compiles general news on combating illegal transboundary movements of waste and chemicals, and synergies and linkages on chemicals/waste related MEAs.*

## REN Activities

### [The fourth REN annual workshop held in Bangkok](#)

The 4th Annual Workshop of Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 25-26 November 2015. The Workshop was attended by thirty-six customs and environmental officers in the Asia Region as well as partners from the Secretariat of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) and BRS' regional centres in China

and Iran, World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific, the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law Basel Action Network, Pesticide Action Network, Swedish Chemical Agency, Freeland and GRID-Arendal.



The meeting updated the trends of illegal traffic of chemicals and waste, and discussed how to sustain the regional enforcement network, and how to address the bottle neck issue of sending back seized shipments. The participants also put forward some recommendations on how to improve inter-agency and inter-regional cooperation.

## Partners' Activities

### [Basel Convention Questionnaires on transit issues](#)

Control system: Transit issues

Within the framework of its mandate to consider what additional steps could be taken to improve the implementation of and compliance with

Article 6 of the Convention, the Committee (for Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance with the Basel Convention) has agreed to undertake activities aimed at improving paragraph 4 of Article 6 of the Convention on transit transboundary movements.

To assist the Committee with its work, Parties have been invited to provide information about their experiences in implementing paragraph 4 of Article 6 of the Basel Convention by responding to a questionnaire, available in English, French and Spanish. A separate questionnaire was developed for stakeholders with an invitation for them to also share their views and experience with transit transboundary movements. Information collected from Parties and stakeholders will be used as a basis for the development of recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on ways to improve the implementation of this provision.

Source: BRS Secretariat (Click [here](#) to read more)

### **Border Dialogue Strengthens Control of ODS Trade and Transit between Thailand and Lao PDR**

Under south-south cooperation framework, a Border Dialogue Meeting between Ozone and Customs officers of Thailand and Lao PDR, facilitated by UNEP Compliance Assistance Program (CAP) was organized in Nong Khai, Thailand 14-15 December 2015 to strengthen the cooperation in ODS trade and transit control. Twenty-seven officers from Thailand, Lao PDR and UNEP attended the meeting. The meeting updated the existing legislation and regulations controlling the trade and transit trade in ODS and ODS-based equipment. The customs of two countries shared information how ODS and ODS-based equipment trade and transit are processed at their check points. As Thai-Lao border is about 1,800 kilometers long, the meeting was able to facilitate both countries to set up communication mechanisms (within and between countries) and action plan to strengthen border control. REN joined the border dialogue and presented how to

combat illegal trade in chemicals and waste through regional enforcement networking.

(Source: UNEP CAP)

### **[Sub-regional consultation on the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention in synergy with the Basel and Stockholm conventions: An integrated approach to pesticides and chemicals management at national and regional level](#)**

The Sub-regional consultation was organized by the Secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention with the help of the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF) of the Kyrgyz Republic in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 16 November to 18 November 2015.

The workshop objectives are to strengthen the national capacities of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to fully implement the obligations under the Rotterdam Convention, emphasizing the cross-cutting aspects with Basel and Stockholm Conventions at the national and regional level; and to explain the ratification process and benefits of being a Party to the Rotterdam Convention, but also to the other MEA.

The difficulties related to the implementation and the synergistic approach of the three Conventions were discussed. It was noted that speeding up the ratification of the three Conventions from the non-Parties in the region would facilitate creating more transparent transboundary movements and improve the trade. Concrete future actions from the participants and recommendations to the Secretariat were adopted and are included in the final report.

Source: BRS Secretariat (Click [here](#) to read more)



## Are You Buying Electronics over the Holidays?

Are you buying electronics over the holidays?

Do you know where your old e-gadgets end up when you part with them?

BAN just launched the Techno Trash Transparency Tracking Project crowdfunding campaign.

Junked computers, old printers, old smartphones. You probably know about the environmental and health problems associated with electronic waste. But did you know that e-waste is still routinely being dumped in developing countries? Unfortunately, it's still business as usual for too many operators that call themselves recyclers and simply export your old electronics.

Environmentally disastrous and often illegal dumping happens worldwide, every day. And the public is still largely unaware of this reality.

BAN knows how to stop it – and bring it to light for others to witness. This new BAN tracking project will update the global picture and discover where your old e-gadgets go.

As discoverers of the global e-waste dumping grounds and creators of the e-Stewards Certification for ethical electronics recyclers, we have been working on a new project to stop the global dumping and raise awareness about it. We have been working to deploy GPS trackers following individual pieces of electronic junk to their final destination. In this ground-breaking and unique project, we've devised an unprecedented GPS pilot project to track North American electronics. BAN has deployed these geo-trackers for over a year now; and many have now crossed the oceans and arrived at their final resting places.

Source: BAN (Click [here](#) to read more)

## Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals

### [U.S. EPA and Customs joint operations at California Ports results in illegal vehicles and engines seized or turned back at border](#)

LOS ANGELES December 9, 2015 - Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced \$94,700 in fines and more than 1,394 items, including engines, scooters and ATVs, that were recently seized, exported out of the country, or destroyed. This was the latest result of their continued joint operations, at the ports of LA, Long Beach, and Oakland, targeting foreign-made vehicles and equipment without proper emission controls, as well as illegal pesticides, imported into the United States in violation of federal law. EPA estimates that the noncompliant vehicles and engines in its enforcement cases announced today would have emitted at least 215,000 pounds of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and hydrocarbons (HC) per year.

“EPA has been working diligently with CBP officers at the ports to ensure all items entering our nation comply with federal environmental standards,” said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. “We will continue our efforts to reduce pollution and protect consumers from illegal imports.”



Under the joint “Operation Stop Your Engine” initiative, EPA conducted inspections at the three California Ports and worked with CBP to investigate companies that had previously imported engines and vehicles. These inspections found that several companies imported vehicles and engines without certification or with emissions controls that did not meet specifications. Engines operating without adequate emission controls may emit excess carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen which can cause respiratory illnesses, aggravate asthma and lead to the formation of ground level ozone or smog.

In total, five companies paid more than \$44,100 in civil penalties for federal Clean Air Act violations:

AKMI Corporation: imported 30 heavy duty diesel engines from China without the proper emission control labels or certificate of conformity. The company was required to have the engines exported out of the country. The company also paid a \$8,400 penalty.

Source: [yabanet.com](http://yabanet.com) (click [here](#) to read more)

### [Waste Crime: Couple Fined For Illegal Exports; Man Sentenced To Prison](#)

Two married company directors and their company have been ordered to pay £130,000 for illegally exporting 187 tonnes of hazardous electronic waste to 6 African countries between 2011 and 2015.

Mark Daniels, one half of the married couple, was also given a 9 month suspended sentence.

The prosecution was brought by the Environment Agency after their officers found 11 shipping containers full of electrical waste destined for Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania – where the waste could cause serious pollution, risking harm to people and the environment.

The BBC’s Panorama programme fitted a hidden tracking device to a broken television and left it at a civic amenity site in south London. The TV was tracked to Daniels

Recycling, a waste site in Warrington, and then back down to Felixstowe port, where officers found the TV in a shipping container. It was seized before it was illegally exported. This evidence formed a crucial part of the Environment Agency prosecution case.

These 40-foot containers, each with about 15 tonnes of e-waste inside, had wrapped items at the front, which were made to look like working products. However, further back the container included hazardous cathode ray televisions and broken fridge freezers which were described as second-hand goods but didn’t work.

Waste company Daniels Recycling, based in Slutchers Lane, Warrington, had already been served with an enforcement notice by the Environment Agency. In addition to these 11 containers planned for illegal export, the Environment Agency prosecutors told the court that the company had illegally exported another 186 shipping containers to Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Gambia and Togo.

Source: [CIWM](http://CIWM) (click [here](#) to read more)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT <http://www.projectren.org/>**

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