



INTRODUCTION

While the substantive activities from project REN ended in December 2017, UN Environment will seek to continue sending this Newsflash frequently to keep you updated about updates from Partners, reported seizures and other interesting articles related to chemical and waste in the Asia and Pacific region. We will also keep you updated about the efforts to develop a follow-on programme for a strengthened regional enforcement network.

Highlights in this edition

- Stakeholders meeting in Bangkok;
- Reminder to the Inspection App 'Watch-IT';
- Reported seizures and other interesting articles concerning waste and chemicals.

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

REN Activities

Stakeholders meeting in Bangkok, Thailand

On the 1st of February 2018 a stakeholders meeting was organized to bring stakeholders together and to discuss on the future of the Regional Enforcement Network on chemicals and waste in the Asia and Pacific region. The participants represented China Customs, Korea Customs, Thai Customs, the World Customs Organization Regional Office for Capacity Building, the World Customs

Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office, Interpol, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Environment, civil society, private sector, the European Union and the current donor Sweden.



The experiences from the past years were shared but the main focus was to gather suggestions and support for a new project proposal for an eventual new project.

Inspection App 'Watch-IT'

In January 2018 the application for enforcement/inspection officers was launched. The application which is named 'Watch-IT' is free to download for Android, IOS and Windows and available in the Google Playstore, App-store and the Windows store. You can use the following words for an easy download: **'Watch-IT inspection tool'**

The minimum system requirements are Android 5.0, IOS 10 and Windows 10.



The logo of the app

We are looking forward to receiving any feedback which you can send via email or by using the rating option in the previous mentioned stores.

Partners' Activities

[Consultation on the European Waste Shipment Regulation](#)

In accordance with the Better Regulation Guidelines calls for consultation on the European Waste Shipment Regulation, an evaluation is the first step in this process. The purpose of the evaluation of the Regulation is to identify the good and bad practices in its implementation and assess whether this has met its objectives on the basis of five criteria (efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, coherence, EU-added value). This public consultation will assist in assessing whether and how the objectives of the Regulation may have been achieved. As such, it offers an opportunity for any interested party, including private citizens, companies, organizations, public authorities, etc. to submit a contribution by expressing an opinion and supplying useful information.

Export of hazardous and non-hazardous waste from the European Union to e.g. Asia is regulated in this regulation. If you or your organization is willing to share experiences you are invited to fill in the online survey via the link below.

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/WasteShipmentReg>

or

Read more: https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-evaluation-waste-shipment-regulation_en

Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals or other related highlights

[China recyclers grind to halt amid crackdown on imported waste](#)

For years the smell of melted plastic permeated the Chinese village of Luwang, where dozens of workshops processed imported waste. Now the village is relatively odourless, caught up in a crackdown on recycling of imported plastic that is causing waste to pile up at ports in the US and Europe.

"We used to import plastic rubbish from Britain...but now customs won't let it in," said Zheng Min, who was guarding the village's government office in east China's Shandong province. Government inspectors swept through the village last May, he added, shuttering its recycling companies.

"All our development has been dependent on plastic. Some people made millions from recycling and developed large companies. Now it's all gone. I never expected the government to take such measures," he added.



Read more: <https://www.ft.com/content/63cf220c-f8ee-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>

[Nanning Customs conducted operations on the border between China and Vietnam](#)

Recently, Nanning Customs, affiliated to Dongxing Customs Anti-smuggling Bureau, seized 1 suspected "smuggled" foreign rubbish in the district of Dongxing. A total of 26.32 tons of leftover materials and scrap materials were seized on the spot. Two vehicles involved in the case were seized and seized, 2 drivers involved. The operation started

the first shot of the special operation "Blue Sky" in 2018 and continued to escort a good country.

Early morning of January 10, Dongxing Customs Anti-Smuggling Branch reported the masses and claimed that someone near the village in the area was shipping the used items that were transported from Vietnam. After a preliminary examination of the clues, the branch dispatched anti-smuggling officers to the target location for further verification. Upon their arrival at the target location, customs anti-smuggling officers found that porters were moving goods packed in green knit bags onto pickups. Because at that time it was early morning and the location was only a few meters away from Vietnam with the Beilun River, it would be possible for those involved in the act of ransom to flee to the Vietnamese side. After repeated consideration, the anti-smuggling police decided to continue squatting and tracking to safety zone re-actions.



Overnight, at about 8 am the same day, the car that was staring at it for a night carrying a full cart of foreign rubbish entered a warehouse in Dongxing city and the operation was ripe. Subsequently, the anti-smuggling police decisively attacked the trucks involved and drivers involved in the seizure. After examination, the goods packed in woven bags for leather scraps, weighing 26.32 tons. The case is under further investigation.

Source:

http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/JqL2Hk4uZ_suhMs8f9Dx4Q

[Raid hits Phnom Penh palm sugar warehouse](#)

Police raided a warehouse storing palm sugar for distribution yesterday, and confiscated some 40 tonnes suspected to be tainted with chemicals.

The large facility producing palm sugar in Phnom Penh's Chbar Ampov district was suspended temporarily by expert officers because they suspected the palm sugar contained illegal chemical substances. Khan Phally, deputy director of the Interior Ministry's anti-economic crimes department, said the inspection was launched on suspicions the palm sugar was made without following the legal norms. He declined to comment further, saying police were questioning the warehouse's owner and taking the sugar into evidence for examination.

Read more:

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/50102825/raid-hits-phnom-penh-palm-sugar-warehouse/>

[Tracking Europe's waste: 'There's gold in them landfills'](#)

Some of Europe's richest deposits of valuable materials are in the trash, ranging from gold in smartphones to cobalt in electric car batteries, according to a survey of urban mining published on Wednesday. Scrap vehicles, batteries, computers, fridges and other electronic and electrical waste total about 18 million tonnes a year and contain materials worth billions of dollars, the report said, urging more recycling. A smartphone, for instance, has a concentration of gold 25 to 30 times that of the richest primary gold ores, according to the study, "Prospecting Secondary Raw Materials in the Urban Mine and Mining Waste" (ProSUM).

A database (<http://urbanmineplatform.eu/>) tracks and predicts flows of materials in 30 European nations, from sales to the dump. "This is one step closer to a circular economy," Pascal Leroy, project coordinator and head of the non-profit WEEE Forum based in Brussels that promotes recycling of waste electronic and electrical equipment, told Reuters. "We've been doing the prospecting stage," Jaco Huisman, of the United Nations University and ProSUM scientific coordinator, told Reuters. He

likened the project to geological surveys for deposits of materials from copper to silver.

Each European, the report says, would own 250 kg of electronics - 3.5 times the average adult weight - along with 17kg of batteries and almost 600 kg of vehicles if all equipment now in use were shared out.

Read more:

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/tracking-europe-s-waste-there-s-gold-in-them-landfills-9870652>

[The world's largest investment fund removed shipping companies because of beaching](#)

The world's largest investment fund, the Norwegian government fund Fund Pension Global, has removed four shipping companies from its portfolio because of beaching. Evergreen Marine, Korea Line and the Thai shipping companies Precious Shipping and Thoresen Thai Agencies PCL have been removed from the portfolio of the fund, which has a total value of EUR 873 billion. A fifth shipping company, the South Korean Pan Ocean, has been placed under observation.



The companies have been excluded because in recent years they have scrapped old ships on demolition beaches in Bangladesh and Pakistan, where 'working conditions are particularly bad' and 'this process causes serious damage to the environment', writes the Norwegian Investment Bank that manages the fund in an explanation.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform, which has been making efforts to prevent beaching for years, is pleased with the decision. "This is the first time shipping companies have been excluded by an investment fund on the basis of their lamentable demolition activities and coming from the largest investment fund in the world this sends a strong signal to

other funds to follow," said founder and managing director Ingvild Jenssen of the organization.

Which companies are excluded or placed under observation are decided by the Ethics Council of the fund. The fund does not support companies that earn their primary revenues from coal, cluster weapons or nuclear weapons and the tobacco industry. In addition, companies can be banned from behavioral violations such as the violation of human rights, serious environmental pollution or large-scale corruption.

Read more:

<http://www.nieuwsbladtransport.nl/Nieuws/Modaliteit/en/Scheepvaart/ArticleScheepvaart/ArticleID/56020/ArticleName/sWereldsgrootsteinvesteringsfondsbandrederijenombeaching>

[Imported berries found to contain excess pesticides](#)

Several shipments of blueberries and strawberries weighing over 6 metric tons that Taiwan's retailers were planning to import were seized last month because they contained pesticide residues in excess of permitted levels, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Tuesday. The products were among an FDA list of 20 substandard food imports that have failed border inspections. Customs inspectors found last month that two shipments of blueberries weighing 5,956 kilograms imported from Chile by hypermarket chain Costco Taiwan had a phosmet concentration of 0.05 parts per million (ppm). In Taiwan, there is zero tolerance for the pesticide in the fruit, according to the FDA.

Read more:

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201801230019.aspx>

[14,000-ton solid wastes seized by Customs](#)

Shanghai Customs has seized nearly 14,000 tons of solid wastes like plastic, slag and cotton from

overseas since last year and 12 criminal cases related to the seizure have been filed, officials said.

In a case, details of which were released by the customs, 16 people involved in a waste smuggling racket were nabbed in December for using a license of a “legitimate” company to smuggle 11,000 tons of trash cotton. The cotton from countries, including Indonesia, Cambodia and Bangladesh, was processed into medical cotton by similar companies. The owner of a local plastics company Hengyou, surnamed Jin, allowed Xu, an intermediary between licensed and unlicensed firms, to use his import license for solid waste. Hengyou has a limit on importing solid wastes every year and if the company failed to reach the import threshold, the limit would go down the next year, Jin told customs police. He was hoping Xu could help him to maintain the limit. Xu, who got licenses from several companies like Hengyou, then used his intermediaries to sell the permits to some unlicensed firms.

To find the whereabouts of the waste cotton imported with Hengyou’s license, customs police tracked its transport and later located the goods in two textile processing companies Xiongda and Chenguang in a county in Wenzhou City, neighboring Zhejiang Province. Workers claimed that the final product made from the waste cotton was cotton items for medical use.

Last year, local customs authorities launched a campaign, code-named Blue Sky, to crack down on smuggling of solid wastes.

Source:

<http://mobile.shanghaidaily.com/metro/society/14000ton-solid-wastes-seized-by-Customs/shdaily.shtml>

[EPD detects illegal collection, storage and handling of chemical waste by recycling sites in Sheung Shui and Yuen Long](#)

The responsible person of a recycling site and the owner of another recycling site, who illegally collected, stored and handled hazardous electronic waste (e-waste), were convicted and fined a total of \$30,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on January 30 and today (February 6) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and

the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has all along been committed to combating illegal disposal of various types of hazardous e-waste. During the operations in June and July last year, two recycling sites in Yau Tam Mei in Yuen Long and Ma Tso Lung in Sheung Shui were respectively caught handling waste printed circuit boards (PCBs) illegally. A total of about 2.4 tonnes of chemical waste was seized and the total market value was about \$240,000.

Upon in-depth investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the responsible person of the Yuen Long recycling site and the owner of the Sheung Shui recycling site. An EPD spokesman explained that hazardous e-waste, including waste flat display panels, waste lead-acid batteries and waste PCBs dismantled from electrical appliances, contains heavy metals (such as lead and mercury) and other toxic chemicals. Improper handling of such waste can cause harm to the environment and public health.

Read more:

http://7thspace.com/headlines/539869/epd_detects_illegal_collection_storage_and_handling_of_chemical_waste_by_recycling_sites_in_sheung_shui_and_yuen_long.html

[Experts look to advance e-waste and WEEE movement guidelines](#)

The first face-to-face meeting has taken place of the United Nations Environment Programme's expert working group tasked with further developing technical guidelines covering transboundary movements of electrical and electronic waste and used electrical and electronic equipment, focusing in particular on the distinction between waste and non-waste under the Basel Convention. Convened at Tsinghua University in the Chinese capital Beijing, the meeting sought to resolve specific issues surrounding, among other topics, obsolete

technologies including cathode ray tubes, identification of relevant actors in transfrontier movement documentation, exemption for used parts, and waste resulting from failure analysis, repair and refurbishment activities.

In addition to comprising representatives from around the world, expert working group observers include Ross Bartley, trade & environment director at the BIR world recycling organisation, and BIR members Sims Recycling Solutions and the China Scrap Plastics Association, together with manufacturers such as Apple, Canon, Hewlett-Packard, IBM and Sony.

According to BIR, one of its key concerns is that its member companies should be treated equally to brand name companies regarding direct reuse, repair, refurbishment and reuse after.

Source: <https://www.recyclinginternational.com/recycling-news/11068/e-scrap-and-batteries/europe/experts-look-advance-e-waste-and-weee-movement-guidelines>

[14 Boat owners arrested for smuggling waste](#)

Gongbei Customs handled a smuggling case where owners of small cargo boats were caught transporting waste materials from Macau to mainland China over an extended period. Gongbei Customs arrested 14 suspects, all of whom were owners of cargo boats. Recently, the suspects bought waste batteries, waste metals and waste plastics from several waste stations in Macau, once or twice every week. After each purchase, they transported two to four tonnes of the waste from Macau to Zhongshan, where a smuggling group would buy the waste and, in turn, sell it to other places. Gongbei Customs believes that 1,000 tonnes of solid waste were transported.

Source: <https://macaudailytimes.com.mo/briefs-um-wins-13-golds-swimming-competition.html>

[High fines demanded for illegal demolition by Seatrade](#)

The Groningen shipping company Seatrade has illegally demolished four ships on beaches in India and Turkey. The Dutch Public Prosecution Service (OM) put this before the court in Rotterdam on Thursday. The prosecutor demanded fines of up to 750,000 euros for each of the three companies

involved that fall under the Seatrade group. The Public Prosecutor demanded prison sentences of up to six months against the chief executive officer and financial chief of the group, of which two months were conditional. A financial director of two subsidiaries heard the same punishment requirements.



Ships that sail to their final destination on their own, contain large quantities of hazardous substances such as bunker oil, lubricating oil and asbestos. That is why it is forbidden to transport them to such countries from the EU. "The demolition of discarded seagoing ships is dangerous for the workers and bad for the environment," the Public Prosecutor told the suspects. According to the Public Prosecutor, Seatrade had the ships demolished solely from financial motives in Asia. 'Deliberately chose suspects for demolishing in poor conditions because it generated the most profit.' By their actions, suspects maintain these reprehensible dismantling methods, said the prosecutor. 'With that they burden developing countries with major environmental pollution and health risks.' The Public Prosecution Service also starts a confiscation order to offset the financial advantage that Seatrade had by illegal demolition. With this judgment, the social pressure on responsible demolition policy continues to increase. Recently, the Norwegian oil fund Government Pension Fund Global decided to stop its investments in four shipping companies, including the fifth largest container shipping company Evergreen Line, due to their use of demolition beaches. Director Ingvild Jenssen of NGO

Shipbreaking Platform called this move 'strong signal, certainly from the largest investment fund in the world. The demolition beaches of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are notorious for their poor working conditions and environmental pollution. The ships are scrapped directly on the beaches, so that all kinds of waste end up in the sea. Moreover, security measures are often lacking. Serious and fatal accidents occur regularly and, according to NGO Shipbreaking Platform, employees who are incapacitated by accidents also do not have to rely on their employer's support. After a downward trend, considerably more ships landed on the demolition beaches in 2016, where three quarters of all ships are being demolished. This was due to the poor market conditions in almost all sub-segments of shipping. Strikingly, many German ships were on the list of scrapped tonnage.

Source:

<http://www.nieuwsbladtransport.nl/Nieuws/Modaliteiten/Scheepvaart/ArticleScheepvaart/ArticleID/56297/ArticleName/OMEisthogeboetesomillegalesloopdoorSeatrade>

[Spurious pesticide unit raided, 2 held](#)

Farmers who had a tough time after buying spurious seeds were now at the receiving end of cheating by spurious pesticide manufacturers. Hayathnagar police on Saturday raided a spurious pesticides unit and arrested two persons running it. The suspects were identified as Tirupathi Pichi Reddy and Veena Naga Srinivas Reddy. Farmers who had a tough time after buying spurious seeds were now at the receiving end of cheating by spurious pesticide manufacturers. According to police, the suspects were selling spurious pesticides at Pedda Amberpet. Based on information, police raided the unit and found pesticide in huge quantity. "Spurious pesticides were seized and samples were sent to the laboratory for tests. The arrested were remanded in custody," said inspector, K. Satish.

Source:

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/crime/110218/hyderabad-spurious-pesticide-unit-raided-2-held.html>

[Bring home your trash](#)

Senate President Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III on Sunday urged Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to clean up the 2,450 tons of trash that it dumped in the country in June 2013. In a statement, Pimentel said that Canada's move of taking back its garbage justifies its claim of being a defender of human rights and rule of law. "I call on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to be true to his word and take back the trash that was shipped to our country in violation of our laws. This can only enhance Canada's self-imposed burden of being a champion of human rights and the rule of law," Pimentel said.

Pimentel proposed Senate Resolution No. 553 on December 4, 2017, calling on for a Senate investigation on the shipment. During the sidelines of the 31st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, Trudeau said that the legal restrictions stopping the return of the trash to Canada have been addressed, saying that it is already "theoretically possible" for the country to get the garbage back.

Read more:

<http://www.canadianinquirer.net/2018/02/12/pimentel-tells-trudeau-bring-home-your-trash/>

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