



INTRODUCTION

For your information, we are delivering this new edition of the Newsflash.

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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

[Nomination procedure for the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award has started](#)

In June the invitations for the nominations for the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award were sent out to many partners and individuals.

No Award ceremony was held in 2016 in Bangkok due to the demise of the King of Thailand, in full respect of the need to cancel all celebrations. Nominations for 2016 Award recipients were nevertheless received before the ceremony was cancelled, and eligible winners will be notified at the same time as 2017 Award recipients.

2016/2017 Awards theme – fighting pollution crime

The 2016/2017 Awards are taking a more focused approach with one category of winners focused on pollution crime; i.e. enforcement efforts in combating illegally traded chemicals and waste, including Ozone Depleting Substances. The previous Awards were given in 2015 to winners of two categories: (a) chemicals and waste, including Ozone Depleting Substances (coordinated by UN Environment); and (b) illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products (coordinated by Freeland with USAID funding). USAID is currently not in a position to provide financial sponsorship of a

wildlife category for the 2016 and 2017 Awards.

For the 2017 Awards, nominations are invited for two individuals and two organizations. Any public enforcement agency and/or individual working these agencies are eligible for nomination to receive the Award. Relevant agencies may include, for example: customs, police, environmental agencies, justice ministries and/or public prosecutors. It may also be represented by and include teams within these agencies (e.g. units, branches, divisions etc.). Outstanding individuals from these agencies are eligible for nomination in the individual category.

Award recipients must be from an Asian country in any one of the 25 countries in Asia Pacific included in the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste supported by UN Environment.

The eligible period concerning activities justifying the nomination (such as seizures, operations, capacity building/ awareness raising activities etc.) must have taken place within June 2016 - June 2017.

Award Ceremony

A high-profile award ceremony will be held on 7 September 2017 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, held alongside the Asia Pacific ministerial meetings on environment and development hosted by UN Environment and UNESCAP. Ministers and high-level dignitaries from 63 countries in Asia Pacific will be in attendance. The laureates will be invited to Bangkok to accept their award (trophy and certificate) at this ceremony.

Partners' Activities

Smarter regulation of waste in Europe

LIFE SMART Waste (LIFE13 ENV-UK-000549) is a five-year project that commenced in June 2014 with the aim of demonstrating innovative ways of understanding, tackling and reducing waste-related crime.

Waste crime continues to be a serious issue. Waste criminals are elusive and persistently profit at the expense of our environment, economies and communities in

Europe and beyond. The issue of waste crime is also widely recognised as a major threat to our ambitions of a circular economy.

The LIFE SMART Waste project was initiated by SEPA in recognition that there are significant gaps in our collective understanding of the causes, dynamics and triggers for criminal activity in challenging waste streams. Closing these gaps offers opportunities to identify and develop practical indicators, deterrents and remedies for such criminal behaviour.

Read more:

https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/306539/20170724_digi-brochure_v1.pdf

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

Three importers fined for illegal hazardous e-waste imports

Three importers were fined a total of HK\$46,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today after they were convicted for illegally imported hazardous electronic waste from Malaysia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Arab Emirates which contravened the Waste Disposal Ordinance.

Between September and November last year, Customs and Environmental Protection Department intercepted four imported containers at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals and found hazardous e-waste comprising waste printed circuit boards inside them.

The boards, with a total market value of HK\$470,000, were intended for import into the city or transshipment to the mainland.

An Environmental Protection spokesman said the intercepted waste printed circuit boards contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead and nickel and other toxic chemicals.

"Improper handling of such waste can cause harm to the environment and public health," he said.

He added that it is illegal to import hazardous waste into Hong Kong for whatever purpose, including import into or transshipment through the city.

Source: <http://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news.php?id=90631>

60.000 tonnes of hazardous wastes imported to Nigeria

A new report released by Basel Convention Coordinating Centre for the African Region (BCCC-Africa), Nigeria has raised concern on the issues of growing consumption and importation of Used Electrical and Electronic Equipment (UEEE) into the country. According to the report, 60,000 tonnes of UEEE are imported yearly through containers containerised vehicles. Presenting the report at a workshop on: "Person-In-Port Project" organized by (BCCC-Africa) Nigeria, the United Nations University (UNU), Germany, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESERA) in Lagos, the lead presenter, Dr. Innocent Nnorom said the project which was in phases took place between February to June 2015 and January 2017. The report indicated that China accounted for about 44 per cent of the UEEE importation, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany and other European countries. He said 41.6per cent of vehicles for UEEE products were in cars while others were stuffed in containers.

Read more: <https://guardian.ng/property/60000-tonnes-of-hazardous-wastes-imported-into-nigeria/>

Chinese authorities seize 85,000 tons in 'Sword' raid

Thousands of tons of materials were seized during a raid in the Chinese province of Guangdong last week. It's the latest enforcement action taken as part of China's ongoing campaign to combat low-quality recovered-material imports.

Enforcement officials seized 85,000 tons of primarily scrap plastics and metals with a value of 1 billion RMB (about \$146.5 million), according to a June 16 report provided to Plastics Recycling Update by Steve Wong, a leader at Chinese plastics recycling firm Fukutomi and the China Scrap Plastics Association.

The materials were seized at 16 warehouses around Guangdong. A team of 172 enforcement individuals recovered the materials and arrested members of five "organized illegal gangs," Wong stated.

"The suspects were arrested and were found to be illegally using third-party import permits for plastic waste imports," Wong wrote in his memo.

The action was carried out by authorities with the Customs of Shantou City; the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine; the Ministry of Environmental Protection; and the Industry and Commerce Department. Citing a statement from a government spokesman, Wong said the agencies have indicated they'll "continue to work coherently and strengthen efforts to fight against solid waste smuggling."

The massive seizure comes roughly four months into the enforcement action. During the first three weeks after National Sword began in February, Chinese state media reported authorities had confiscated more than 22,000 tons of material and

arrested dozens of people suspected of illegally trafficking waste materials.

Experts say National Sword is having a substantial impact on the U.S. export market and the recycling industry as a whole.

As those impacts continue, fears are also swirling over rumors of a wider materials ban in China's future. Although the industry is preparing for that possibility, there has been no official confirmation from China that a materials ban will be implemented.

Source: <https://resource-recycling.com/plastics/2017/06/21/chinese-authorities-seize-85000-tons-sword-raid/>

Illegal trade declared as tobacco waste

Approximately 18.6 metric tons of smuggled tobacco was seized at the Port of Taichung in central Taiwan early this month, Taichung Customs said on Wednesday.

Two cargo containers registered as carrying tobacco leaf waste imported from Vietnam were opened for spot checks early this month at the port, Customs officials said.

After removing the outer layers of bags containing tobacco leaf waste, inspectors discovered fine cut tobacco that was not on the list of imported materials.

The smuggled cargo, weighing 18.6 metric tons, was later found to have been hidden among materials imported by a Taichung-based company to produce organic fertilizer.

Officials also determined that the tobacco was in the form of so-called "formula cut cigarettes," which can easily be used to produce cigarettes, according to Taichung Customs.

The smuggled materials could have been used to produce more than 1.46 million packs of cigarettes, which, if sold domestically, would have evaded more than NT\$46 million (US\$1.5 million) in cigarette tax and a health surcharge of at least NT\$29 million, officials said.

The cigarette tax is currently NT\$30.8 per pack in Taiwan. In addition, each pack of cigarettes is also subjected to a health surcharge of NT\$20

Source:

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/2017/06/22/498931/taiwan-customs.htm>

Solid waste not allowed into Malaysia without approval permit

No solid waste is allowed into the country without an approval permit (AP) to prevent Malaysia from becoming a dumping ground.

A National Solid Waste Management Department (JPSPN) spokesman said any company that intends to bring in waste such as plastics must first obtain an AP even before the importation process begins.

However, JPSPN said any plastic wastes that are found abandoned comes under the control of the port authorities and the Customs Department as they have not left the Customs area.

"The onus is on the importers to send back the plastic wastes that are contaminated and do not have proper AP," said the spokesman in an e-mail.

JPSPN has approved a total of 18,323 AP from 2015 till April this year.

Companies applying for these APs must be registered with JPSPN, have a factory or premises approved by the local council, and a permit compliance letter from the Department of Environment.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Malaysian Freight Forwarders (FMFF) president Alvin Chua Seng Wah said many foreign nations choose to dump waste in Asean countries, especially those with weak regulations.

Chua said FMFF has proposed to the port authorities that shippers who bring in containers with scrap materials for the purpose of dumping must be told to ship them back to the country of origin.

"There is no regulation here at the moment so we have written to the port authorities," he added.

Chua said shippers and shipping lines must be responsible and cannot feign ignorance as they are responsible for the cargoes and containers.

Source:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/06/28/solid-waste-not-allowed-into-malaysia-without-approval-permit/#SQUaSLw68ZrusE4S.99>

Illegal imports pose risk to public health



Members of the anti-smuggling unit of the Xiamen Customs, Fujian province, uncover illegally imported waste material.

Frequent cases of the illegal importation of used clothing, including items collected from morgues, have resulted in the introduction of stricter measures, and the central government is expected to issue a new action plan soon.

On May 26, the customs in Xiamen, in the southeastern province of Fujian, detained a group of smugglers who had shipped 500 metric tons of used clothing to China from Pusan Port in South Korea.

The anti-smuggling unit discovered 3,596 packs of used clothing inside the vessel. The filthy clothing, which emitted a strong smell, contained items such as furs, sweaters, denims, children's wear and even bloodstained underpants.

"All these used clothes were collected overseas, at secondhand markets and morgues. These places don't have sanitation procedures, so some of the items harbor bacteria," said Zhang Ruiyu, an officer at the anti-smuggling department of the Xiamen Customs, according to a report in Legal Daily.

When the clothes had been sorted and washed, they would have been sold in small online shops or at late-night stalls, "posing a huge risk to human health", Zhang said.

Irrespective of the condition or origin of used clothing, it's importation to China is prohibited, because its poor sanitary

condition can pose a severe threat to public health, and processing the items may also damage the environment, according to experts.

Despite that, many cases of illegal importation are still being uncovered. In March, customs police and officials from the commerce department, the anti-smuggling unit and border patrols in Shantou, Guangdong province, discovered 96 tons of used clothing in storage.

The smugglers are motivated by the huge profits available. Items in good condition can fetch tens of yuan per kilogram, or less than 10 yuan (\$1.40) per item, in Jieshi township in Guangdong, a center for outlets that process and sell discarded clothing, including illegally imported goods.

When resold in stores, the price soars, often by a factor of 10, producing huge profits for the vendors, according to a report published by Xinhua News Agency on Friday, which estimated that stores can make about 200,000 yuan a year from these activities.

Liu Jianguo, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of the Environment, said the utilization of solid waste, including discarded clothing, results in higher costs to the economy and the environment because the waste can contain high levels of pollutants.

When he reported to the nation's top legislators in May, Chen Jining, a former minister of environmental protection, conceded that "the environmental problems resulting from illegal imports are still serious".

Chen said special investigations in places suspected of heavy involvement in the illegal importation of solid waste will be a major task for inspection teams dispatched by the central government.

In April, the government approved a new action plan to tackle the illegal importation of solid waste. The plan will allow the authorities to adjust the list of banned imports and take comprehensive measures,

including economic, legal and administrative tools, to combat the problem.

Source: <http://www.ecns.cn/2017/06-2/262435.shtml>

Cocaine, cigarettes and R22 refrigerant

Cocaine, cigarettes and R22 refrigerant were amongst a haul of illegal items caught up in a large-scale operation targeting counterfeit goods by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

While Operation Renegade was primarily targeted at the international trade in counterfeit auto spare parts, an additional 400,000 counterfeit goods, including chewing gum, toys, perfumes, headphones, garden appliances and sunglasses, were also halted at the EU's doorstep.

Also seized in the operation were 8,024kg of R22, 56 million cigarettes and 668kg of cocaine.

The R22 seizure was found in two shipments during the operation in April – one of 490 cylinders and the other of 100 cylinders. The origin of the refrigerants has not been clearly established, but preliminary investigations suggest that the cylinders were transshipped in Afghanistan and transported to Pakistan.

Under the coordination of OLAF, EU and Asian customs authorities carried out targeted physical checks on more than 400 containers. Most of the European ports were involved in the operation, which, over the course of two weeks, uncovered a wide array of counterfeit goods.

The operation was coordinated by OLAF, with the support of a team of six customs liaison officers from Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, Norway, China and Europol, all working together in Brussels. During the operational phase of Renegade, OLAF facilitated the cooperation between the EU Member States, Norway, 12 Asian countries (Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Lao, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), Interpol, Europol and the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Western Europe (World Customs Organisation).

Source: <http://www.coolingpost.com/world-news/cocaine-cigarettes-and-r22-refrigerant/>

Food producers using prohibited chemical dyes in Mandalay

A total of 23 food products on sale in markets around Mandalay have been found to be dyed with prohibited chemicals, officials say.

Authorities from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) used a mobile laboratory to inspect food products in Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city.

The authorities inspected a total of 128 food products in markets and found 23 of them to be unsafe as they have been dyed with prohibited chemicals.

"We have inspected four markets [in Mandalay] as a monthly routine. We're now working to stop this practice. We're working with the FDA in Yangon.

And we're also planning awareness programmes on prohibited chemical dyes," said Dr Kyaw Kyaw from the FDA in Mandalay.

The Mandalay FDA started inspecting food products in the city's markets along with other government organisations in 2015.

Source: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/10369>

Taiwan tackles risky chemicals in food

Taiwan's Environmental Protection Agency is increasing controls of chemicals in food. It has designated 13 substances that pose a risk to food safety for the priority notification list of the Toxic Chemical and Substances Control Act (TCSCA).

A draft list has issued in April for a 60-day public comment and consultation period.

Once the consultation period is complete and the list promulgated by the EPA, importers and users must:

- require prior approval from the EPA bureau before import/use;
- disclose intended use; and
- ensure such chemicals bear labels stating 'prohibited from use in food products'.

The move is part of Taiwan's efforts to tackle a number of major systemic food safety scandals. Speaking last month, its Premier Lin Chuan stated that the government's "five rings of food safety",

launched in June 2016, have already reaped benefits. For more information on Taiwan's broader plan to control chemicals in food products, and tackle major systemic food safety scandals

Read more: <https://chemicalwatch.com/57369/taiwan-tackles-risky-chemicals-in-food>

6 firms to pay for destruction of waste oil containers

The Supreme Court today directed six companies to pay Rs 39 lakhs to the custom department for incineration of containers containing waste oil, illegally imported from abroad.

A bench of Chief Justice J S Khehar said that earlier too, the apex court has directed the incineration of such containers in 2005 and 2014 when 113 and 212 containers were respectively destroyed.

It said some companies had not paid the amount to the customs department for destroying these oil containers dumped on the Indian shores.

Advocate Sanjay Parikh, appearing for NGO Research Foundation for Science, told the bench that this waste oil was illegally mixed with lubricants and other materials causing health and environmental hazards.

He said the waste oil contained chemicals which could contaminate the environment affecting the human beings as it contain mixtures of hydrocarbons, emulsions and other toxic substances.

The bench said that cost should be recovered from the managing directors of these companies, irrespective of whether they are subsisting or not.

The apex court gave six weeks time to the companies to deposit the amount with the custom department for the purpose.

Parikh said that the import of waste oil into India had been prohibited by the apex court since 1997.

During the hearing, the bench told the counsel for customs department that it does not need the court's direction for recovering the cost for incineration.

The counsel pointed out that several companies which have imported the waste oil have now been liquidated or do not have any property.

To this, the bench said that in such cases, the managing directors will have to pay the cost as they cannot shift the liabilities to the companies.

Earlier, the apex court had appointed a monitoring committee to oversee the destruction of such containers after a Dehradun-based laboratory had found that the substance was toxic in nature.

Source:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/sc-asks-6-firms-to-pay-for-destruction-of-waste-oil-containers/articleshow/59460192.cms>

Customs grab 122 tonnes of fake pesticide

European customs have seized 122 tonnes of illegal pesticides, pouncing on shipments entering the continent through ports and airports, Europol said Thursday.

The 10-day operation called "Silver Axe II" saw national custom officers, Europol and the European Anti-Fraud Office conduct operations in 16 countries, including Britain, France, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

"The number of counterfeit pesticides seized is enough to almost cover the size of Luxembourg twice," or more than 452,000 football fields, said Europol spokeswoman Tine Hollevoet.

Most of the counterfeit chemicals were produced in China, using substandard and often dangerous chemicals, added Chris Vansteenkiste, head of Europol's IPC3 intellectual property crimes unit.

Fake pesticides have the potential to severely damage crops, pollute the environment and be harmful to health, the agency said.

They can also be combustible at an extremely low temperatures, said Vansteenkiste.

"Some of these chemicals combust at temperatures as low as 28°C, making them extremely dangerous to transport and store," Vansteenkiste told *AFP*.

The fake pesticides are now stored in specialised facilities and will soon be destroyed, he added.

Europol last month singled out China and Hong Kong as overwhelmingly the largest shipment centres in the world for fake goods.

With the rising use of freight rail links between China and Europe, there are also concerns that criminal networks may seize on a potentially cheaper or faster alternative for transporting goods than container shipping or air links.

Source:

<http://www.thesundaily.my/news/2017/07/06/customs-grab-122-tonnes-fake-pesticide-europol>

Shipbreaking update

There were a total of 210 ships broken in the second quarter of 2017. 158 of these ships ended up on South Asian beaches for dirty and dangerous breaking [1]. The Platform was able to document five accidents at the shipbreaking yards in Chittagong, Bangladesh, between April and June, which led to the death of four workers and the injury of two.

Read more: <http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org/platform-publishes-south-asia-quarterly-update-13/>

Video:

<http://www.ardmediathek.de/tv/Plusminus/Abgewrackt-in-Bangladesch-Schmutzige-Sp/Das-Erste/Video?bcastId=432744&documentId=4355532>

China's ongoing efforts regarding waste crime

In early July, 60 inspection teams swept into cities in 27 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions across China. Their sole mission: to catch law-abusing waste importers. A week later, on July 11, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) reported that nearly 77 percent of all waste-importing companies evaluated were suspected of unlawful acts.

The surprise inspections, which will continue throughout the month, follow a February plan from the General Administration of Customs to combat the smuggling of solid waste. Dubbed "Sharp Sword 2017," it promised to clamp down on the plastics, discarded electronics, city garbage, and industrial materials flowing across China's borders.

All of this foreign garbage, as it is colloquially called, poses pollution risks to the environment and health risks to people.

China imports about 50 million tons of waste per year about as much as 10 of China's largest cities produce in household garbage annually. Beginning July 1, the monthlong campaign aims to monitor companies involved in importing, recycling, and repurposing waste from abroad and punish instances of misconduct.

Read more:

<http://www.sixthtone.com/news/1000484/china-hopes-to-scrap-reliance-on-imported-waste>

China says it won't take any more foreign garbage



China notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Tuesday that it would stop accepting shipments of rubbish such as waste plastic and paper as part of a campaign against "foreign garbage".

The import ban, which will enter into force by the end of 2017, will also cover slag from steelmaking, and many kinds of waste wool, ash, cotton and yarn.

"We found that large amounts of dirty wastes or even hazardous wastes are mixed in the solid waste that can be used as raw materials. This polluted China's environment seriously," China's WTO filing said.

"To protect China's environmental interests and people's health, we urgently adjust the imported solid wastes list, and forbid the import of solid wastes that are highly polluted."

China is a major importer of waste. Last year it imported 7.3 million tonnes of waste plastics, valued at \$3.7 billion, accounting for 56 percent of world imports.

Apart from Hong Kong, the biggest sources of that plastic waste were Japan and the United States, which accounted for roughly 10 percent of the volume each, according to data from the International Trade Centre, a United Nations-WTO joint venture.

The same two countries are also the main sources of scrap paper going to China each year, accounting for half of the almost \$1 billion business between them.

China's speedy industrial development has seen it struggling to regulate waste disposal, leading to toxic waterways and cities blanketed in smog.

China plans to conduct a nationwide survey of pollution sources, and has urged local authorities to speed things up by launching local investigations by the end of July, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said on Monday.

Source: <https://www.streetinsider.com/>

More information about this topic:

<http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/china-confirms-need-sort-mixed/>

[Samsung will start recycling of Note 7 phones soon](#)

Samsung will recover an estimated 157 tons of gold, silver, cobalt and copper for recycling from the Galaxy Note 7 devices it took out of circulation due to safety concerns. The electronics company has announced it will collaborate with industry players in Korea as well as abroad to optimise the recycling of both metals and individual parts.



Samsung Electronics has declared its upcoming Galaxy Note FE device is designed to minimise waste of resources – especially rare earth metals – by incorporating parts from unopened Galaxy Note 7 phones. This includes components such as OLED display modules, memory semiconductors, and camera modules.

Meanwhile, the substantial share of recovered metals and parts sourced from used handhelds will be recycled starting this month.

A total of 4.3 million handhelds of the Note 7 smartphone have been manufactured, which are said to contain 730 000 kilograms (1.6 million pounds) of high-end materials.

According to Samsung, a primary objective is to find new ways to recycle materials from its products so it may 'actively lead' the tech industry in terms of recycling and environmental protection.

Source:

<http://www.recyclinginternational.com/recycling-news/10689/e-scrap-and-batteries/korea/samsung-will-start-recycling-note-7-phones-month>

Compiled and edited by Mr. Huib van Westen and reviewed by Mr Andy Raine. Information presented under 'partner activities' is obtained from external sources. UN Environment and SIDA do not verify its accuracy or endorse this information in any way.

Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (funded by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and implemented by UN Environment)

Contact us at:
United Nations Environment
Asia and Pacific Office
UN Building, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
Tel: +66 2 288 1874, Fax: +66 2288 3041
Email: vanwesten@un.org

Websites: <http://www.projectren.org>
<http://www.roap.unep.org>