



INTRODUCTION

The REN team wishes you and your beloved ones,
a Happy New Year!!!

Highlights in this issue:

- REN Training workshop in Malaysia in cooperation with GRID-A and TAIEF
- Annual National Contact Points meeting RILO AP
- Annual workshop from the Regional Enforcement Network (REN)
- Participation in Border Cooperation meeting in Nepal
- UNIDO meeting on Minnamata Convention
- Envicrimenet meeting
- General Assembly IMPEL
- Seizure of illegal ODS shipment at the Solomon Islands
- Seizure of Chemicals
- Seizures of waste and waste related stories
- Scam recycling, report of Basel Action Network

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

[REN National Training workshop in Malaysia](#)

In cooperation with the Royal Malaysians Customs Academy (AKMAL), UN Environment organized a REN national training workshop in Malaysia from 5 to 8

- September 2016 for 30 customs, enforcement officials and other competent authorities. Participants came from Royal Malaysian Customs, Royal Malaysian Policy, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- (a) increase institutional and individual capacity of the enforcement agencies on combating illegal trade in waste and chemicals;
- (b) provide enforcement officers with practical skills in identification of wastes and chemicals, risk profiling, and return-back procedures;
- (c) share experiences and best practices among enforcement officers on combating illegal traffic of waste and chemicals;
- (d) strengthen cooperation of environmental authorities and other enforcement agencies; and
- (e) promote coordination between Malaysia and European countries.

- The workshop was delivered with technical assistance from GRID-Arendal and the European Union's Environmental Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Facility (TAIEF) that sponsored two IMPEL (European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law) listed experts as lead resource persons. International resource persons were also sourced from the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia Pacific of the World Customs Organization, the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, and the Pesticides Action Network for Asia and the Pacific.

- The four objectives of the workshop were met. The workshop gave 30 officers in Malaysia a working understanding of Basel/Rotterdam/Stockholm Conventions and latest trends of illegal trade in chemicals and waste, together with an understanding of impacts to human health, the environment, and gender issues. Participants were trained in best practices from counterparts in Europe including on identification, risk profiling and handling

of chemicals and waste. The UN Environment Enforcement Handbook was distributed and used extensively. Importantly, the workshop facilitated the cooperation among Royal Malaysia Customs and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment on agreement to develop standard operating procedures for working together on these issues. Furthermore, EU experts, RILO AP and Malaysia Customs also agreed to further enhance information exchange on waste and chemicals shipments, including follow up on a real-time example identified during the workshop.



[The 28th Administrative Meeting for National Contact Points of Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific \(RILO A/P\)](#)

At the invitation of the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P), Mr Huib van Westen, attended the 28th Administrative Meeting for National Contact Points of RILO A/P, which was held in 1-3 November 2016 in Seoul, Korea, and introduced and presented an update on the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (REN). More than 70 delegates and observers, from 19 Member administrations, 4 regional bodies (ROCB A/P, RILO ME, RILO WE and WCO ROCB), 4 Embassies (Japan, Russia, United Kingdom and United States) attended the Meeting and shared information on various transnational crimes, such as drugs, security and environment-related crimes.

[5th REN Annual workshop](#)

The 5th REN workshop was organized by UN Environment in the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 8-9

November 2016. The workshop was attended by 14 customs officers and 14 environmental officers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, China Hong Kong, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as 20 representatives from international organizations and partner agencies including the Swedish Embassy, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Basel Convention Regional Centres (China and Iran), the World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (WCO RILO A/P), the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE), the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), Basel Action Network (BAN), BAN TOXICS, Pesticide Action Network for Asia and the Pacific (PANAP), Crop Life Asia, UNIDO, UNITAR and UN Environment.

The meeting was held back to back with the Regional Workshop on the Minamata Convention organised by UNIDO and Government of Switzerland.

An update on recent REN activities was given as well on the global and regional trends in illegal trade in chemicals and waste by several countries. Basel Action Network (BAN) gave an update on their transparency project on e-waste. Discussed were the challenges and opportunities for information and intelligence sharing, synergy building and repatriation of illegal shipments. Updates from the Secretariats, Basel Convention Regional Centres, Pesticides Action Network (PANAP) and partner organisations such as IMPEL, INECE and RILO AP were given.

A panel discussion was held on how to make the REN network more sustainable.

The gender sensitive aspects in relation to illegal trade in chemicals and waste included the enforcement was introduced.

A Group discussion was organized on ideas for future operation of REN.



Border coordination meeting Kathmandu

REN participated in the Border Coordination & Coordination meeting on HCFC trade and illegal trade in waste and chemicals organised in Kathmandu, Nepal at 12 and 13 December 2016. Senior Enforcement officers from Ozon departments, Customs and Police from Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal discussed various topics to combat illegal trade. REN introduced their activities and gave presentations on intelligence exchange, examples of cross border cooperation and introduced the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award.

Partners' Activities

Unido meeting on Minamata Convention

On 10 November in Bangkok the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation held a meeting concerning the Minamata Convention. Participants from Customs and Environmental organisations were updated on the Convention and its restrictions.

6th Envicrimenet Annual General Meeting

The 6th EnviCrimeNet Annual General Meeting (ECN-AGM), hosted by the Police Force of the Slovak Republic, was held on 3rd and 4th November in Bratislava. Experts and practitioners from 20 European countries, Europol, Interpol, the European Commission and the World Customs Organization met to discuss best practices, latest developments and challenges posed by environmental crime. One of the main topics was the 'Slovak Initiative' and its implementation in form of an EU Action Plan to combat environmental crime.

For the last six years, Europol has provided the permanent Secretariat for the ECN, an informal network of practitioners combating environmental and wildlife crime.

EnviCrimeNet supports the Slovak initiative and the proposal of an Action Plan.

One of the priorities of the Slovak Presidency in the field of Justice and Home Affairs is the fight against environmental crime. The Presidency therefore prepared an initiative on countering environmental crime, which was discussed at the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP) on 29th September 2016 and also at the ECN-AGM on 3rd and 4th November 2016. The Presidency prepared draft council conclusions on countering environmental crime, which will be followed up by an Action Plan. At the ECN-AGM it was suggested that the ECN should help with the implementation of the Action Plan.

The two-day AGM served as a platform to discuss national and international cooperation of law enforcement and other agencies involved in combating environmental crime. Particular attention was given to illegal waste trafficking through organised crime groups (OCGs) and other illegal actions in relation to waste as a form of organised corporate crime. Also covered were wildlife-related crimes (with a particular focus on birds), criminal behavior in relation to safety and industrial plants, and illegal logging. These four main topics were further discussed in workshops. Outcomes and recommendations will be presented shortly. During the meeting the close cooperation of the ECN with three other important networks was highlighted. These networks are:

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL);

The European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment (ENPE);

The European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment (EUFJE).

Other outcomes from the meeting were: Mr. Roel Willekens from the Dutch Police will chair the network for another year. In preparation of its Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2017, Malta joined the ECN Steering Group.

Source: www.envicrimenet.com

15th IMPEL General Assembly

Between 1 and 2 December 2016, the 15th meeting of the IMPEL General Assembly took place in Bratislava, Slovakia. The participants were reminded of the strategic direction of the network, as laid down in its Multi Annual Strategic Programme. The representative of the European Commission again expressed the value of IMPEL's activities and its contribution to a better and more effective implementation of EU environmental law. He stated that the European Commission's Compliance Assurance Initiative was also mainly inspired by IMPEL.

A number of decisions were taken, including:

Welcoming the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture & Environmental Protection as 36th member country to our network

After four years, John Seager stepped down as Chair of IMPEL. He will be replaced by Chris Dijkens of the Netherlands. Ana Garcia from the Portuguese Environmental Inspectorate becomes the new Vice Chair of IMPEL as of 1 January 2017

In order to measure IMPEL's impact of its activities at the national level and local level, it was agreed that member countries will complete an annual national reporting form. This will help IMPEL to better understand the quantitative and qualitative impact of IMPEL's work in member countries and if the activities are targeting the identified implementation gaps.

Having several other networks at the General Assembly provided a great opportunity to link with them and explore possibilities for future cooperation. IMPEL is working to join together various European networks with the aim of uniting our efforts in combating environmental crime and improving implementation of the environmental acquis. The

Environmental Enforcement Networks conference, held in May 2016, is an example of that.

Source: www.impel.eu

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

ODS Seizure by Customs at Solomon Islands

The Customs and Excise division of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, alongside the National Ozone Unit- Energy Division within the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification has seized imports of five cylinders of R12 gas.

The 5 cylinder of gases contains R12 refrigerant gas, which has been banned in the country since 2007.

"As a regulation to this illegal import, the Importer is responsible to send the item under their own expenses," a statement from the National Ozone Unit-Energy Division said.

"Hence these imported items had been sent out of the country through the importers' arrangement on 30th November, 2016," the statement added.

"This has been the second incidence that happened this year according to records.

"The first illegal import was done early in the year with Cylinders Labelled as R134A, which is allowed to be imported into the country.

"However when tested with the Gas Identifier, it contained the banned ODS gas which is R12.

“Twenty four of this has been confiscated and are to be sent back to the country of Export.

“In terms of wrongful labelling the importer is liable to pay a fine for False Declaration according to the Customs Act,” the statement said.

It said gases such as Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) mainly R12 imported to be used as refrigerants are banned and are not allowed to enter into the Country.

“Gases such as HCFC mainly R22 are treated as restricted imports.

“HFCs and Hydrocarbon gases are allowed to enter.

“All gas importers are to contact the National Ozone Unit, Energy Division at the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification before importing gas containing Ozone Depleting Substances.

The National Ozone Unit under the Energy and Rural Electrification Division of the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification is the office that looks after the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in the Solomon Islands.

The National Ozone Unit reports to the Ozone Secretariat and the Multilateral Fund of the United Nations Environmental Program. It also reports to the National Government on issues relating to Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS).

Source:

<http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/11779-customs-seizes-cylinders-containing-poisonous-gas>

Man nabbed at airport with banned pesticides

Colombo: Sri Lanka police at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) have arrested an individual while attempting to smuggle in 1,200 packets of 100 gram D-ERA pesticide packets which contain a pesticide banned in Sri Lanka.

The 48-year-old suspect was arrested Thursday evening during a raid conducted by the officers at the arrival lounge acting on information received.

The suspect, a resident of Kottaramulla, is to be produced

before the Negombo Magistrate today.

Airport police are conducting further investigations.

Source:

http://www.colombopage.com/archive_16B/Dec09_1481266767CH.php

1,800 bags of red chilli waste seized by vigilance officials

KHAMMAM: Vigilance and enforcement officials, along with local police, raided cold storage units and seized as many as 1,800 bags of chilli waste on the outskirts of the district on Sunday. The officials had earlier conducted raids in different places and seized 40,000 chilli waste bags and seeds. They registered five criminal cases against 13 persons in Madhira, Khammam and Mudigonda mandals in the district. Sources say there is a factory at the Mudigonda mandal headquarters which is meant for extracting oil from chillies and people who are involved in the sale of spurious chilli powder purchase the product from the factory. According to rules, chilli wastage is not supposed to be sold in the open market but should be used only in thermal power plants for burning coal. However, some people purchase it from the factory and sell it to those who manufacture spurious chilli powder. Later, after refining the wastage, they sell it in open market by mixing it with branded powders.

Several persons have been earning crores of rupees by transporting chilli waste to Guntur, Kadapa, Kurnool, Ananthapuram and Chennai illegally.

The racket has been going on for the last two years in the district, however, it came to light after vigilance department officials conducted raids on some cold storages and houses in Madhira, Mudigonda, Konijerla, Pallipadu and Allipuram villages and towns in the district. According to

vigilance circle inspector N Venkatesh, the manufacturers have been preparing spurious chilli powders by mixing chemicals and acids which are said to be harmful. It is learnt that chilli waste is being sent to Indonesia from the extracting factory in Mudigonda mandal headquarters. According to doctors, spurious chilli powder causes ulcer and other diseases. There are strict instructions that such powders should not be used for preparing food items, Venkatesh added.

Source:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/telangana/2016/d ec/12/1800-bags-of-red-chilli-waste-seized-by-vigilance-officials-1548110.html>

Hong Kong Sends Boxes with Hazardous Waste Back to Romania

The Hong Kong authorities have ordered the return of 123 containers to Romania, after it was discovered that these were laden with potentially hazardous waste.

An undisclosed container carrier transported the containers out of Romania which later ended up in Hong Kong.

Earlier media reports indicated that the 2010-built containership OOCL Charleston was involved in the transportation of the material, however, Hong Kong-based container carrier OOCL told World Maritime News that “OOCL (or OOCL Charleston) was not involved in bringing the 123 containers into Hong Kong.”

OOCL added that it “continues to be working very closely with the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.”

“This would include, for example, providing assistance and information to EPD to fully understand how this cargo, declared as Copper Matte and suspected as potentially hazardous waste, may have come to be imported into Hong Kong by the original carrier (not OOCL) and the related parties involved,” OOCL said.

NOTE: The original article stated that the containership OOCL Charleston, and not the original carrier imported the potentially hazardous waste.

Source:<http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/206224/correction-hong-kong-sends-boxes-with-hazardous-waste-back-to-romania/>

Secret Tracking Project Finds that Your Old Electronic Waste Gets Exported to Developing Countries

40% of e-Waste given to Recyclers gets Shipped Illegally to Polluting Operations Overseas

Utilizing high-tech methods to track high-tech wastes, the environmental watchdog, Basel Action Network (BAN) as part of their e-Trash Transparency Project, funded by the Body Shop Foundation, planted GPS trackers into 205 old printers and monitors and then delivered them to charities and recyclers. The new report, entitled Scam Recycling: e-Dumping on Asia by US Recyclers, revealed that of those that were handed over to American electronics recyclers, 40 percent did not get recycled in the US as expected by customers, but were instead exported to highly-polluting and unsafe operations in developing countries -- mostly in Asia.

Source:

<http://myemail.constantcontact.com/Secret-Tracking-Project-Finds-that-Your-Old-Electronic-Waste-Gets-Exported-to-Developing-Countries.html?soid=1114999858498&aid=MECAiXlhS2s>

See also www.ban.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

<http://www.projectren.org/>

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)

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