

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP 3C: HAZARDOUS WASTE AT PORTS

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GOALS

- To design a project to improve enforcement to reduce shipments of hazardous waste through ports.
- To discuss success stories (including the IMPEL-TFS project), potential new partner countries, and synergies with the Green Customs Initiative.

1 INTRODUCTION

At the start of the workshop, the facilitators gave short introductions to the subject, highlighting the fact that international transport of waste is a growing problem that needs serious attention, and noting the growing awareness about the problem.

2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Workshop participants offered the situation in the United States as an example of the growing awareness of the problem. As a consequence of the September 11th attacks, U.S. Customs agents are now more aware of all kinds of international transport, including transport of waste. Therefore, customs has become a natural partner in the fight against illegal waste trading, and greater attention has been paid to both import and export procedures, as well as the need for new approaches for tracing waste streams.

There are also initiatives from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to support data systems. Additionally, there is awareness that international cooperation is urgently needed to tackle the problem. Exchange of information is essential, although uniform definitions and interpretations are often difficult to achieve

with many parties involved in the process.

Nevertheless, we have to realize that each of us faces similar problems. So we should work together to solve some of the difficulties and use the opportunities and strength of the INECE network to learn from good practices and to disseminate valuable information.

Some valuable experiences are available from the IMPEL-TFS project. This project, which was presented in brief, combats illegal transfrontier shipments of waste from European harbors to non-OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. Further details can be found in a separate paper, as published in Nancy Isarin's paper in Volume 1 of the 7th INECE Conference Proceedings.

In the subsequent discussion, it was stipulated that our common goal should be to stimulate and coordinate enforcement and compliance through joint projects dealing with hazardous waste at ports. Countries in both the developed and the developing world should participate in these projects, since a lot of waste is shipped from developed countries to developing countries to avoid the cost of proper recycling or disposal. In the countries receiving waste, there is often little or no legislation; enforcement is often weak or

missing; and proper treatment/storage facilities may be absent. Human health and the environment are consequently put at risk.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INECE

To stimulate proper action, INECE could take the initiative to create and coordinate an action plan with clearly defined goals, project partners, a funding strategy, and a scheme for implementation. Potential partners are: IMPEL-TFS, Green Customs, UNEP, the World Customs Organization (WCO), Interpol, the Basel Secretariat, Basel Action Network, the Chemical Legislation European Enforcement Network (CLEEN), OECD, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, the Strategic Council on Security Technology, Toxics Link, and other NGOs. After adoption of the action plan, a report on the enforcement cooperation project might be expected in spring of 2006.

Based on the ideas of the workshop participants, some components of the action plan could be the following:

- INECE participants should organize a simple and effective initial means for the exchange of TFS-data. At this stage, it is not desirable to invest a lot of effort in setting up sophisticated databases since that would require too much time and too many resources; in addition, the essential underlying infrastructure is missing.
- INECE participants should recommend focal points in each of the relevant interested countries, as is done in IMPEL-TFS projects. The purpose of these focal points is to disseminate general

knowledge and to exchange specific information on shipments with focal points in other countries. The ideal focal point should have good contacts with other TFS stakeholders in his/her country, such as customs, police, and NGOs.

- In conjunction with the focal points, joint inspections should be organized for training and instruction, as well as a means to share and adopt good practices in tackling TFS problems.
- INECE participants should devise a simple instrumental toolkit that interested countries can use to find out whether they have a (potential) problem with TFS through their harbors. Through the use of this toolkit, the situation with respect to TFS can be brought to some clarity in those cases where basic information on the subject is currently lacking.
- Further work on raising awareness of the problem of (hazardous) waste shipments is needed. Such work could include ensuring that media outlets pick up and spread stories of successful enforcement cases against illegal waste transports. Naming and blaming the offenders could also be considered. To get the problem on the political agenda, providing information to NGOs and the general public is essential so that political pressure can be built.
- Based on what is known from IMPEL projects and other information, INECE participants should identify harbors in countries or regions that are probably the most sensitive targets for illegal shipments, as well as specific waste streams that represent the most severe risks. An initial focus for follow-up activities can then be defined.