



CHINA ECA DIALOG ON COOPERATION IN BORDER ENFORCEMENT INCLUDING JOINT TRAINING / CONSULTATION OF CUSTOMS OFFICERS IN URUMQI, CHINA, 23-25 JUNE 2009

MEDIA BRIEFING

Strengthening national institutions through regional co-operation

Forty (40) Chinese Customs Officers from Urumqi Anti-Smuggling Bureau, Policy & Regulation Division, Field Service as well as Customs Offices in Kashi, Allah Mountain, Huoerguosi and Urumqi airport participated in a training related to the Montreal Protocol to Protect the Ozone Layer in Urumqi, China, 25 June 2009.

It was the first time that such training was conducted in the Western part of China addressing the issues related to illegal trade of ozone-depleting substances (ODS). The participation of Customs and Ozone Officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan provided the opportunity to establish initial contacts and to exchange information between China and its neighboring countries.

The training raised awareness of Customs Officers on their important role in protecting the ozone layer and preventing illegal trade with ozone-depleting substances (ODS) and informed on commonly used smuggling schemes. During the training, the use of identifiers was demonstrated and the contents of actual refrigerant containers verified.

The training was preceded by a 2-day Dialog on border enforcement between China and the participating Central Asian countries to establish modalities of communication and cooperation between Customs and Enforcement Authorities and Ozone Focal Points in the participating countries and to implement measures to improve border control in general.

The main problem appears to be the availability of CFC refrigerants, halon fire extinguishers and CFC-based refrigeration equipment originating from China on the local markets in Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries despite the fact that China did not issue export licenses in recent years. Usually, ODS cylinders are legally purchased on local markets in China e.g. Urumqi and smuggled in private cars and passenger trains across the border. However, larger scale smuggling of ODS in containers and trucks can be suspected.

The meeting agreed some 25 recommendations related to the implementation of policy measure including bans of placing on the market of virgin CFCs, labelling requirements for refrigerant cylinders, registration and certification schemes for technicians and companies dealing with ODS, log-book keeping for importers, exporters and dealers of ODS and mandatory proof of origin for ODS imports. Other more short-term

recommendation concern the designation of focal points for better cross-border communication, awareness campaigns to discourage potential smugglers and to inform on the potential fines and sentences in case of law breaking.

The meeting also agreed to continue this dialog in the framework of the recently approved Enforcement Network of the Regional Ozone Network for Europe & Central Asia (ECA network) and to invite the Chinese delegation to attend the first meeting of the ECA enforcement network in Budapest, Hungary, 12-14 October 2009.

The meeting was opened by the Director General of MEP's Foreign Economic Cooperation Office Mr. Wen Wurui, the Head of Urumqi Customs Mr. Wang Zhixiong and the Deputy Division Chief of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau in Beijing Ms. Liuying Yang. The meeting was additional staff of MEP FECO, UNEP's offices in Bangkok and Paris offices, a Polish policy expert and a Chinese trainer.

The Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) and the China Customs Administration in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized this Dialog as a continuation and follow-up to the earlier Dialog initiated during the Trilateral Meeting with China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on control of trade in ODS held in Issyk-Kul Lake, Kyrgyzstan, 25-27 August 2005.

The meeting documents and presentations will shortly be made available through the ECA network's website:

http://fr1.estis.net/sites/ecanetwork/default.asp?site=ecanetwork&page_id=307B1890-AC52-476A-990E-07220A21C262

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Regional Ozone Network for Europe & Central Asia (ECA network)

The Regional Ozone Network in Europe and Central Asia was created in 2003 with the technical and financial support from the Multilateral Fund, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Slovak Republic. It is part of UNEP DTIE's OzonAction Compliance Assistance Programme and includes the following 12 member countries:

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Turkmenistan.

The ECA network is a dynamic group of countries spread over three sub-regions (Caucasus, Balkan, Central Asia). It does not formally include Countries with Economies in Transition (CEIT countries) which are supported by the Global Environment Facility. However, those countries participate in some of the network activities as part of their GEF-funded institutional strengthening projects:

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

Several countries have already acceded to the European Union. Cyprus and Romania have been reclassified as Article 2 countries and are no longer a member of the ECA network. Romania, however, continues to support the network as bilateral partner. Other countries are accession or candidate countries.

The network is supported by implementing agencies and bilateral partners (UNDP, UNIDO, World Bank, Austria, Czech Republic, European Commission, Hungary, Romania, Slovak Republic and Sweden) as well as the Multilateral Fund Secretariat and Ozone Secretariat. Additional partners include the World Customs Organisation's Regional Intelligence Liaison Office (RILO CIS), the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), the International Institute of Refrigeration (IIR) as well as industry, TEAP and TOC experts.

Regional networking provides a regular interactive forum for Ozone Officers from the region to exchange experiences, develop skills, and share knowledge and ideas with counterparts from both developing and developed countries in order to meet compliance, the provisions of the Montreal Protocol and its amendments. Through regular network and thematic meetings and on-going dialogues, networking helps ensure that Ozone Officers have the information, skills and contacts required for managing national ODS phase-out activities successfully. Specific compliance assistance is provided to countries with compliance issues.