

Minsk Seminar, 26-27 January 2006

ChemSec supports the formation of Belarusian NGO network on chemicals control

On 27-28 January 2006, representatives of the International Chemical Secretariat attended a stakeholder meeting in the capital of Belarus, Minsk, on chemical safety and the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on the elimination of Persistent Organic Pollutants, so-called POPs. The event, entitled "Seminar on Chemical Safety in Belarus" gathered representatives from a number of National Agencies, Research Centres, Universities, Government Ministries and National NGOs, as well as representatives of American, Czech and Swedish Environment Organisations.

The seminar was organised as part of the international NEWs-project on the precautionary principle and international chemicals regulation. The seminar, hosted by the Foundation for the Realisation of Ideas, FRI, and the Belarusian Ministry of Environment, also received funding from the World Bank.

The agenda of the meeting centred around issues of chemical safety and legislation in general, and in Belarus in particular, and the specifics of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. On behalf of ChemSec, Nardono Nimpuno gave a presentation on the new EU chemicals policy under development, and its implication for non-EU countries, such as Belarus. Representing the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature, Helena Norin described the Precautionary project and informed participants on routes to Green Consumerism.

At the NGO meeting held as a follow-up to the seminar, Belarusian NGOs decided to form an NGO coalition to work for Chemical safety in Belarus. This collaboration will cover a range of national and local organisations, e.g. BirdLife Belarus, Labour Women, Chernobyl-watch and a number of Belarusian environment organisations.

Material: In the run-up to the seminar, a report on chemicals regulation in Belarus was issued by the organisers. In addition, ChemSec is preparing a number of Fact-sheets on the pre-cautionary principle as a part of the NEWs project, to be released soon.