



9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum

For Central and Eastern European,
Caucasus and Central Asia Countries

PROCEEDINGS

September 20-22, 2007
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

**9TH INTERNATIONAL HCH AND PESTICIDES FORUM
FOR CEECCA COUNTRIES**

**OBSOLETE PESTICIDES
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN,
CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION:
START OF CLEAN UP**

PROCEEDINGS

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The 9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum and this book are results of joint efforts and supports of many people involved in the problems of obsolete pesticides all around the world.

We call you all to keep making efforts towards sustainable solutions for the environment.

Warm thanks and good luck!

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FOREWORD

Dear Colleagues,

The organizers was pleased to **welcome** representatives of scientific communities, central and local governmental administration, NGO's and business associations from CEECCA Countries and international organizations with experience on obsolete pesticides, as well as other individuals and organizations active in the field of obsolete and POP pesticides, at the 9th International HCH and Pesticide Forum.

The **aim of the Forum** was to continue the discussion for creating a program for inventory and elimination of obsolete pesticides, which was successfully addressed at 8th Forum in Sofia, Bulgaria (2005).

The Forum was undertaken under the framework of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and supported activities of the countries for implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) practices to solve the problems with obsolete pesticides, establish contacts between the interested parties, attract attention of investors, industry, public, authorities and mass media.

The **Forum objectives** were to review the state of the NIP's for the Stockholm Convention and to discuss the barriers and opportunities in the NIP implementation process; to review the existing monitoring systems in the countries related to the POPs and obsolete pesticides problems; to present and exchange technologies and experiences for waste management and destruction of obsolete pesticides and contaminated soils based on the existent case applied in Moldova; to increase policy – awareness on the obsolete pesticides issues in the region based on the countries experience since May 2001; to discuss the national and regional strategies, actions plans and financial options for elimination of the obsolete pesticides stockpiles.

The Main Topics of the Forum were:

- NIP's for the Stockholm Convention state and implementation: barriers and opportunities;
- Monitoring and risk assessment of pesticides in environmental components and human bodies;
- Practical experience in waste management and destruction technologies;
- Site remediation;
- How to prevent pesticides stockpiles today and tomorrow;
- Public participation in Moldova and EECCA countries related to pesticides stockpiles issue;
- Demonstration of the Moldovan activities in the field of removal, packing and evacuation of the OP from centralized warehouses and of the phyto-remediation pilot project activities.

PREAMBLE

The **International HCH and Pesticides Forum** represents a platform for discussion between stakeholders of all kinds, working on implementation of projects related to POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical waste. It acts as a catalyst in the exchange of information for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and other chemicals related multilateral environmental agreements, and the environmentally sound management of pesticides, pesticide waste and other chemicals.

The Forum brings together governments, donors, UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector for an exchange of information in an open and informal atmosphere.

On September 20-22, 2007 the 9th Forum on HCH and Obsolete Pesticides was held in Chisinau, Moldova. This Forum was initiated and enabled by the International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA) and hosted by:

- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Republic of Moldova
- International HCH & Pesticides Association (IHPA), The Netherlands
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- Regional Environmental Centre for Moldova (REC Moldova)
- Milieukontakt International, The Netherlands

In the 9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum in Chisinau, **140 participants** from **35 countries** attended. Status reports were presented from many countries from the Eastern Europe, Caucuses and Central Asia (EECCA) region. The presentations emphasized again the adverse impact of obsolete pesticides on human health and the environment and stressed the importance of good quality NIPs as a basis for implementing sound chemicals and waste management as required under the international agreements.

During the course of the Forum it became clear that this broad and important theme requires more attention and action on the international agenda in order to reduce risks to local communities and to the global environment, threats to export in the agricultural and fisheries sectors and for development of sustainable tourism.

BACKGROUND

The first HCH and Pesticides Forum was held in 1992 in Zwolle (The Netherlands). It started with status reports on the perception of the problems related to the presence of obsolete pesticides in different countries. During the next Forums in **Magdeburg (1993)**, **Bilbao (1994)**, **Poznan (1996)**, **Bilbao (1998)**, **Poznan (2001)**, **Kiev (2003)** and **Sofia (2005)** the scope of the Forum was enlarged with exchange of information on common practice, technical solutions, risk assessment, the specific problems in Central European and EECCA countries, training, technology development and funding. Over this more than a decade the number of participants has grown from 40 till 140. The number of institutions present in the Forum has increased accordingly.

The value of the International HCH and Pesticides Forum as a whole is the possibility for the ‘pesticides community’ to debate important issues such as technology transfer, partnership and ‘lessons learned’ from failures and successes. This debate brings better understanding, and presents ideas for those preparing and implementing (National) Implementation Plans for obsolete pesticides, management of chemicals and sustainable agriculture, together aiming at overall sustainable development.

It is to be noted that the European Union stresses that Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs) are an instrument to establish priorities and to determine the necessary means to achieve them. The EU further encourages the Parties of the Convention to seek coherence between NIPs and other existing and future plans to be developed in the area of chemicals management. The EU stresses the importance for Parties to use NIPs as a mechanism for enhancing strategies and strengthening cooperation between Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and urges Parties to integrate sound management of chemicals, including NIPs, in their national strategies for sustainable development, national development plans and other national and sector based development plans.

The above position has specifically been expressed to the 8th International HCH and Pesticides Forum for which official letters of support have been received. Letters from members of the EU Parliament and the European Commissioner to the Environment are especially worthy of mention.

Since the last Forum in Sofia in 2005, many countries have become Parties to the Stockholm Convention and are working on the preparation or finalization of National Implementation Plans (NIPs). **The actual status** is that 152 countries have signed and 148 countries have become Parties to the Stockholm Convention. In total, 64 countries have submitted a National Implementation Plan, of which 59 in the years 2006 and 2007. **The challenge for the coming years** is to put these NIPs in place. This requires reliable inventories and assistance in the funding of projects and programs for training, repackaging and destruction of obsolete and POPs pesticides.

WHO has estimated that in 2050 every second human being will die from cancer due to contamination in food, water and the environment.

Until now, attention has been given only on a limited scale to the problems of soil and groundwater contamination as a consequence of former stocks of pesticides, especially regarding the medium and long-term negative effects threatening food production and groundwater quality.

INTERVIEWS

Press interviews Bala S.Sugavanam, the editor of **POPs Newsletter**, had with H.E. Constantin Mihailescu, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Republic of Moldova, H.E. Wieslaw Stefan Kuc, Member of the European Parliament and John Vijgen, Director of IHPA.

(POPs Newsletter, no.14, December 2007, <http://www.ihpa.info/newsletters/14/newsletter14.htm>)



**H.E. Constantin MIHAILESCU,
Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources,
The Republic of Moldova**

POPs Newsletter: *Sir! Your Country though small in Europe has come forward to organize the 9th IHPA Forum here in this beautiful city of Chisinau, Why? Are POPs a major concern in Moldova?*

Minister: POPs as well as other toxic chemicals are a matter of serious environmental and health concern in Moldova. Perhaps the visibility of the problems is higher and the perception is more acute in Moldova due to the higher density of, especially rural, population and agricultural orientation of the national economy.

POPs Newsletter: *Moldova by definition is a country whose economy is in transition. So it cannot afford to divert funds to meet EU environmental standard. How do you plan to meet economic development and environmental management of international standards?*

Minister: Indeed, Moldova's economy is undergoing major changes while internal financial resources are scarce. However, the Government is taking affordable measures. In 2002, the Government initiated the activities of repacking of obsolete pesticides from dilapidated old warehouses spread all over the country and storing them in a number of safer facilities. The work was implemented by specialized units of the Ministry of Defense and the Department for Emergency Situations while financial resources were provided from the state budget and the National Environmental Fund. GEF and NATO member countries are also providing support. On the other side the only chance for Moldovan economy to increase its competitiveness and become more sustainable is to comply with international environmental standards. Given the fact that agriculture still is, and will remain, a major sector of the traditional economy, the Moldovan food products could impose themselves on the international markets due to their good biological qualities and safety.

POPs Newsletter: *You are surrounded by Ukraine/Romania which also have many problems associated with POPs. So Moldova alone cannot solve the problem in isolation. Do you have any sub regional approach to deal with POPs problems?*

Minister: Of course, the problem of obsolete pesticides is a regional one and must be addressed in tight collaboration between neighboring countries. Up until now, this collaboration between Moldova, Ukraine and Romania is developing in the general context of environment protection at regional level. Of course, a more direct approach of this problem is necessary, at ministry level, in the framework of some treaties or common projects etc. We believe that this 9th IHPA Forum, held in Chisinau will give this collaboration a more concrete orientation/direction.

POPs Newsletter: *Do you think Moldova is getting enough assistance from Aid Agencies in its environmental management to achieve the proper economic development?*

Minister: The financial support Moldova is receiving from the international organizations and western countries has increased considerably during the last few years. This is well observed in all domains of activity, including environmental protection and agriculture. We are deeply thankful to all these organizations for their help. Our job/objective now is to extend this collaboration and to orientate the external means to a more efficient use, in order to achieve as soon as possible the ecological standards that would allow our country to gain a place in the united European Family.



H.E. Wiselaw Stefan KUC,

Member of the European Parliament (MEP)

POPs newsletter *Sir! You are very personally involved in spreading the message of the environmental/social/economic impact of obsolete stocks of pesticides. Why do you think this is a major problem in Europe and beyond?*

Mr. Kuc, MEP: In my fifty years of life in Europe I never heard of the problem of pesticides until a few years ago when I felt the problem of obsolete pesticides. When I heard how many tons of obsolete pesticide in Poland contaminating the water/soil, I realized this as one of the main problems affecting environment, agriculture, trade and of course food

safety. It is a big problem in Eastern Europe and also in Africa and the rest of the world. These obsolete pesticides will create barriers for trade in food products. So in all it is a big problem for all the people not only for my people but also to people of all countries in the region. So I decided to put all possible effect in increasing awareness of this problem among my colleagues in the European Parliament. So in September 2005 I initiated the first meeting in the EU parliament and established a Working Group of MEPs to define clear and achievable goals.

POPs Newsletter: *How do you think an exhibition on obsolete stocks of pesticide will send the message to common man and the Aid Agencies?*

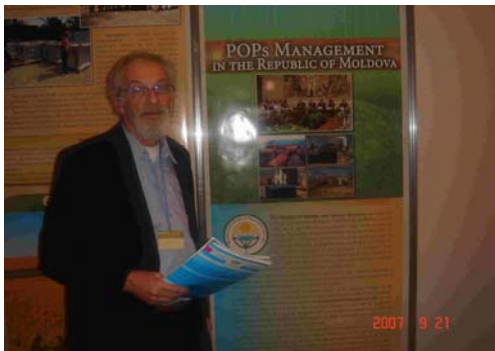
Mr. Kuc, MEP: Most of these obsolete stocks of pesticides are buried underground and people cannot see and are not aware of these pesticides and what harm they are doing to health and the environment. For example, how children are affected by exposure to obsolete pesticide is similar to children exposed after the Chernobyl incident in 2006, more and more MEPs from new member countries showed serious interest in the problem and wanted eradication. Then it was agreed to organize an exhibition "Danger: obsolete Pesticides" in Brussels and a Public hearing was held. Both events were a great success. Following this I published the book the book "Danger: obsolete Pesticides" with articles and photos. The exhibition will travel around Europe so that all people including politicians have greater awareness to the problem and act together.

POP Newsletter: *As a Member of the European Parliament do you think enough support is given by the EU to countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asian region to address the requirements of Stockholm Convention/Rotterdam Convention and the Basel Convention?*

Mr. Kuc, MEP: The aid from the EU at this moment is not enough. With the cost of about Euro.5000 per ton of obsolete pesticides and with thousand of tons for disposal and also training of people and improving institutions to deal with pollution will need bigger money. We think that if we have big money we can quickly solve the problem. But it is not true, it is only imagination. For example Arab countries have big funds due to oil resources, but their problems do not go quickly. We need lot of experience digging and clean up and organization is important to solve the problems. I have made it clear in my presentation in this Forum.

POPs Newsletter: *A small country like Moldova along with the IHPA has taken the responsibility of organizing this Forum. Do you have any message to the Government and the people of Moldova?*

Mr. Kuc, MEP: It is complicated and I have already mentioned in my speech. The mandate of the Moldova Forum should betake to other countries. The size of the country is not important but its action and correspondence with other counties on solving the problems is important.



**Mr. John Vijgen,
Director of IHPA**

POPs Newsletter: *You have single handedly started the NGO-IHPA Today it has grown into a unique Association concentrating on technical matters related to POPs and obsolete stocks of pesticides. Tell me what made you to start this Association and what do you expect to achieve in a broad sense?*

Mr. J.V.: I started the Association because we as scientists have been gathering for several years and in talking about problems, methodologies, exchange ideas but could not solve

the problem. You have to find ways of reaching other people, the society and the decision makers not just the technical people. Only through an association we can make a voice and move forward. Bring the issue on the agenda and bring the awareness and make the people and the politicians to eliminate the problem from the poor people and the poor countries that cannot help themselves yet.

POPs Newsletter: *Since the IHPA Poznan Forum in 2000, you have now reached the 9th Forum in this beautiful capital of Moldova. It is a long journey. Are you satisfied with the achievements of IHPA?*

Mr. J.V.: Yes and no! One side I am happy we started with a small group of 40 people in 1992 and now we have 140 people and now we have more inputs and commitment from scientists, politicians and the people. We did create the awareness and activate the people to do something, but when it comes to action not much happens. They should go to the politicians and ask them to change something, changing means cleaning and eliminating the problem of poor people.

POPs Newsletter: *Having obtained support from many organizations, do you think aid agencies appreciate environmental NGOs' work and give necessary support to achieve their objectives?*

Mr. J.V.: Lot of agencies do support NGOs related to environment but always related to their own programmes if you work within their framework you can get support. Now with various conventions such as Global warming/chemical Conventions there is a way forward. But nice conventions such as Basel and Rotterdam Conventions do not have financial mechanism and luckily the Stockholm Convention, like Montreal Protocol has some money to do something.

POPs Newsletter: *What is your ultimate goal in the area of mitigating the impact of POPs?*

Mr. J.V.: Our aim is to move the society so far with funding so that we could start to clean-up. It will take a long time to clean up the ultimate goal is to get in the countries, with very little means, not enough, awareness to eliminate this problem. And we can make a difference cannot only talking but do something about it.

POPs Newsletter: *Moldova has done a very good job in organizing this Forum. Do you have any message to the countries in the region regarding POPs?*

Mr. J.V.: I think Moldova is a good example, you know it is a poorest country in Europe but what they have done actually and if one looks at the changes since they started in 2001, they have been doing capacity building, they have educated the people, there is a lot of awareness on pesticides and POPs, they have done a lot in cleaning up the first 1100 tons of obsolete pesticides, another 1000 tones of PCBs and now getting funds from NATO/OESC to start coalition to get together in the next phase clean up. They have done extremely well and we can reproduce in other countries Moldova's example.

POPs Newsletter: *What is your message to EECCA Region?*

Mr. J.V.: They need more political commitment, more awareness to the people, push ministers and politicians to take the responsibility and action to bring their needs to international organizations which means signing and ratification of the Convention, if they have not done that, look for funds such as the EU Neighborhood partnership and include it in their National Action Plan.

FORUM DECLARATION

The participants in the **9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum** representing governments, donors, IGOs, NGOs, the private sector, civil society and academia, meeting in Chisinau on 20-22 September 2007, expressed their gratitude to the Government of Moldova for its hospitality and generous contribution in organizing this Forum.

The participants...

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

Stress the continuing negative impact of POPs, obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals on human health, the environment, wildlife and natural resources such as soil and groundwater, and are aware of the adverse economic consequences thereof,

Recognise the need for ensuring the dissemination of information and public participation in the decision making process regarding POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals,

Stress that if the population is well informed they will support Government actions on cleaning obsolete pesticides and help in solving the problem

Stress people have the **right** to be informed by the government

Stress the sustainability of solutions to obsolete pesticide problems require public involvement in the entire process

Welcome and support the initiative of FAO, IHPA, Green Cross, Milieukontakt and USAID with the help of other UN Agencies to submit the Capacity Building Project for 10 EECCA countries to the GEF and **urges** the GEF to proceed rapidly in order to facilitate urgent implementation of the project,

Recognise the powerful impact on policy-makers and donors of visual presentations about the threats to health and the environment from POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals. In this connection, the efforts of the European Parliament led by Mr. Wieslaw Kuc are acknowledged in raising awareness of EU Members of the Parliament by means of a large Public Session in the EU Parliament in May 2007 and the organization of the exhibition "Danger Obsolete Pesticides".

Further **recommend** to continue these efforts by hosting similar exhibitions in the European capitals and at other International Institutions such as GEF/World Bank to further raise awareness among the public and decision makers in order to secure more financial support.

Recommend that such exhibitions be replicated in countries of other regions including Africa, Asia and Latin America to stimulate public and political awareness,

STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Recognise the important benefits to be gained by the countries in the region from the adoption and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements addressing chemicals,

Recognise the value of high quality NIPs and other studies as foundations for taking action towards the elimination of risks from POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemicals,

Recognise the importance of sound national policies, legislation and strategies for pesticide, chemicals and hazardous waste management in preventing future accumulation of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals,

Acknowledge the role of the EU and the UN system as well as bilateral initiatives (twinning) in the implementation of actions to eliminate POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical wastes in the countries of the region,

Recommend, that countries prioritize within their NIPs, National Development Plans and other relevant action plans action for POPs and obsolete pesticides removal and destruction, and capacity building to prevent recurrence of similar problems;

Recommend that countries identify and formulate projects for the prevention and elimination of POPs and obsolete pesticides;

Recommend the adoption of the FAO *International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides* in the NIS countries and **Welcome** the actions of Ukraine in promotion of the FAO code,

DONORS

Acknowledge the crucial contribution that GEF makes to addressing POPs and obsolete pesticide prevention and elimination and building on the positive experiences in Moldova, **Urgently request** the GEF, after changes in their organization to expeditiously support POPs and pesticides clean-up projects.

Call upon EU to include into the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1), the obsolete pesticides and POPs issue to facilitate country applications for financial support through this mechanism;

Further Call on the EU and other donors to recognize the growing momentum and desire among governments and civil society to eliminate and prevent POPs, obsolete pesticides and hazardous chemical stockpiles and to support national and regional initiatives in this area;

Call on the chemical industry to support activities aimed at eliminating legacy stockpiles of chemicals and preventing their recurrence;

Request the Parties of the Stockholm Convention recognise the urgent problems related to the so called polygons and uncontrolled dump sites of POPs and other dangerous chemicals which are particularly prominent in the EECCA region;

IMPLEMENTATION

Recommend the creation of a 'technical committee', acknowledged by the EU and donors, consisting of a small group of experts for specific advice on complex problems related to dangerous chemicals and land pollution;

Recommend the implementation of common monitoring programmes and comparable risk assessment systems for POPs in the environment;

Furthermore the participants **expressed** their appreciation for the efforts of the Director of the IHPA and for his continuing energetic support and contributions in keeping the issue of obsolete pesticides on the international agenda.

**HCH & PESTICIDES FORUM: NEW STEPS IN DIMINISHING
AND ELIMINATION OF POPs DANGER (OPENING SPEECH)**

Constantin MIHAILESCU

Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Republic of Moldova

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, I have the honour and the pleasure to welcome the participants and the guests of the 9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum. This event brings together representatives of scientific communities, central and local administration, NGO's and business associations from Central and Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia Countries and from international organizations, as well as other individuals, companies and organizations active in the field of obsolete and POP pesticides.

I use this opportunity to express our gratitude to our colleagues from other countries and to the international organizations for their appreciation of Moldova's achievements and experience in the field of obsolete pesticides management – I understand that this played a big role in the organization of this Forum in Chisinau.

The Forum is undertaken in the framework of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and will activate and support activities of the countries for implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) practices to solve the problems with obsolete pesticides, establish contacts between the interested parties, attract the attention of investors, industry, public, authorities and mass media to this issue.

During this Forum, the discussions for creating a program for inventory and elimination of obsolete pesticides, which was successfully addressed at 8th Forum in Sofia, Bulgaria (2005), will continue. The Forum objectives are to review the state of the National Implementation Plans (NIP) for the Stockholm Convention and to discuss the barriers and opportunities in the NIP implementation process; to review the existing monitoring systems in the countries related to the POPs and obsolete pesticides problems; to present new technologies and exchange the experiences for waste management and destruction of obsolete pesticides and contaminated soils; to increase policy awareness on the obsolete pesticides issues in the region based on the countries experience since May 2001; to discuss the national and regional strategies, actions plans and financial options for elimination of the obsolete pesticides stockpiles.

Concrete actions in diminishing the impact of obsolete pesticides' stocks in Moldova started in 2002, following on a special Government decision. With the financial support from the state budget and the National Ecological Fund, units of the Ministry of Defense and the Department of Emergency Situations started the repacking of these pollutants in more than 350 partly demolished warehouses and their centralized storage in a limited number of safer facilities.

These actions were carried on and continue with the financial support of international donor organizations via a series of projects such as the „POP Stockpiles Management and Destruction” Project financed by the GEF and the “Remediation of POP pesticides polluted areas and clean-up of PCB contaminated oil in power equipment” Project, financed by Canada Persistent Organic Pollutant Fund, both implemented by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources through the World Bank; the NATO/OSCE Project for Destruction of Pesticides and Dangerous Chemicals, implemented by the Ministry of Defense; the Regional Project „Elimination of Acute Risks of Obsolete Pesticides in Moldova, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan”, financed by the Dutch Government and implemented by Milieukontakt International.

As a result of these activities, over 3000 tones of obsolete pesticides were repacked and safely stored in Moldova. This part of the work has practically been completed, and this year we initiated the process of evacuation and destruction of these pollutants. The process is complex and needs time and substantial financial means to be carried on, but it has already started and the first 412 tones of pollutants were evacuated.

From this perspective, on behalf of the Government of Moldova, I would like to thank the governments of western countries, the international organizations, the international experts for their support and successful

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collaboration with the institutions and teams from Moldova in the process of diminishing and eliminating the risks caused by obsolete pesticides.

We are aware of the situation and problems regarding the obsolete pesticides that most of the countries in this region are facing. Generally, they are similar. Nevertheless, the ways of solving these problems may differ, depending on the economic, policy and social aspects. The accumulated experience that is shared between neighbors may stimulate and ease the entire process on national and regional level. This way, such meetings as the one we are initiating today are very important. We are sure that at the end of these 3 days of work, reports, discussions, sharing ideas, each of us will return to work with some new knowledge, ideas and experience, that will allow us step forward confidently in the process of diminishing and elimination of the danger, the pesticide wastes represent, for the environment and population health.

I wish all of you success during this 9th Forum and in your daily activity and I hope, as well as everyone here, that at the next Forum we will be able to report on and discuss the real progress in the management and destruction of obsolete pesticide stocks and the substantial reduction of their impact.

I would also like to wish you a nice stay in Moldova and – even if you are our guests for just a few days – I hope you will have the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of Moldovans and that you will take home good feelings about our country.

**THERE ARE NO BORDERS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS
(WELCOME ADDRESS)**

Wieslaw Stefan KUC

Member of European Parliament

Dear Chairman!

Dear Participants in the Forum!

I am very pleased to welcome you at the today's conference.

The problem of the obsolete pesticides is of high importance taking into consideration the risk to the environment, agriculture, trade and of course food safety.

Just at the beginning of my work in the European Parliament I noticed that there are really a lot of things to be done in this matter and – to my surprise – the consciousness, regarding this problem, is not so high.

So I decided to put all possible effort into not only increasing awareness of this problem among my colleagues in the European Parliament, but also convincing them of the need to act.

Therefore in September 2005 I initiated the first meeting in the Parliament and invited Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to discuss the issue and possible solutions. During this meeting it was decided to establish a Working Group of MEPs that then could help to move the issue forward and to define clear and achievable goals.

On 1st February 2006, the first meeting of the Working Group on Obsolete Pesticides took place in Brussels. During this meeting we were happy to find more and more MEPs of the new member countries, as it was clear that we have to take the lead if we seriously want to eradicate obsolete pesticides from our countries.

On April 2007 I published a book "Danger Obsolete Pesticides", which is a compilation of articles of the obsolete pesticides specialists and politicians together with photos.

Since the February 2006 meeting, we have achieved the first results of our efforts and have agreed to organize an exhibition "Danger: Obsolete Pesticides" in the European Parliament, in Brussels, on 30th April–4th May 2007, with a Public Hearing in the European Parliament during the exhibition. The exhibition and a Public Hearing was a great success. The number of participants surpassed our expectations and we had a huge back - up, too.

Further, it is planned that the exhibition will travel around Europe so all citizens in the countries and politicians have the chance to see the real situation and can act together with us.

Currently, I have been working on budgetary amendments related to obsolete pesticides.

To fight effectively and successfully with the negative effects of obsolete pesticides the financial funds in the European Union budget should cover:

- promotion the activities related to elimination of stockpiles of obsolete pesticides,
- an assistance of experts in the field obsolete pesticides,
- special monitoring programs of lands and forests,
- increase the awareness and clear information among the society
- these appropriation is intended to support cross-border cooperation in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (especially in Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Romania, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia).

It is extremely important to work on this issue on a regional, national and global level. The problem of obsolete pesticides and their negative effects cannot be dealt separately. We cannot isolate the countries that suffer from this problem. There are no borders in the environmental matters. This is the issue on which we should work together. And that is way the EU needs a strong neighbourhood policy, especially directed to countries of East Europe and Asia.

There is already the Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (OJL 310, 9.11.2006, p. 1). This regulation is related to:

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- the European Union support for cross-border cooperation in Eastern Europe and the southern Caucasus,
- the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes involving Member States, Central and East European countries and partner States, financed through the Structural Funds, Community external assistance programmes and the pre-accession instruments Phare, ISPA and Sapard, and bilateral assistance initiatives,
- set of priorities are defined together by the European Union and the partner countries, to be incorporated in a series of jointly agreed Action Plans, covering a number of key areas for specific action, including among others energy, transport, information society, research and innovation and environment,
- promotion of political, economic and social reforms across the neighbourhood,
- and the most important – Community assistance to support measures to promote environmental protection, nature conservation and sustainable management of natural resources including fresh water and marine resources,
- providing support for actions aimed at increasing food safety for citizens, in particular in the sanitary and phytosanitary domains.

We know that there is still not enough being done to protect us against the risk related to obsolete pesticides. Various reports and presentations have demonstrated the potential impact of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous chemicals on the environment and on problems of soil and groundwater contamination.

WELCOME ADDRESS AND GRATEFUL THANKS

John VIJGEN

Director of IHPA

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I all wish you a very warm welcome in the beautiful capital of Moldova, Chisinau and I hope you will enjoy the beauty of the city and the charm of its inhabitants.

Let me first thank you all for coming and join our common efforts in the region to get rid of obsolete pesticides in the next years.

Let me thank the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mr. Mihailescu and his staff for the invitation to come to your country, the organizing committee and specially the people who have been doing the work, Valentin Plesca, Ion Barbarasa, Andrei Isac and Larisa Cupcea and who have been doing an excellent job!

Let me thank the staff of the LeoGrand Hotel of servicing us here in the coming days.

Let me also thank Member of the European Parliament Mr. Wieslaw Kuc for his continuous efforts to bring awareness to other politicians and to make obsolete pesticides his issue. He is a champion for our common issue.

Let me also thank our IHPA Chair of the Board Bram de Borst, who since the very start of our works in 1992 continuously has been supporting us. Not to forget Konstantin Terytze member of the Board being the long-term supporter for Moldova, Bulgaria and other Eastern European countries.

And just to remember it is very easy to become IHPA ambassador if you want to make a difference or even a co-editor of the IHPA Newsletter. Mr. Sugavanam has been working now several years and I am very grateful for his great job and he is here these days to talk with you if you want to join or bring news on pesticides from your country or region two times per year.