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# IHPA: Chemical 'Time Bomb' in Ukraine Endangers 7 Million People

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International HCH and Pesticides Association Calls for Immediate Action by EU

BRNO, Czech Republic, September 23 /PRNewswire/ -- The health of at least 7 million inhabitants in Moldavia and Ukraine is seriously threatened by a stock of old pesticides. This has been reported by the International HCH and Pesticides Association (IHPA). According to the organization the EU must act as fast as possible to disarm this 'biggest chemical time bomb of Europe'. This was incited at the closure of the 10th HCH & Pesticides Forum of the IHPA in the Czech Republic.

During the congress it became known that in the former Kalush factory in the west of Ukraine there is a stock of no less than 10,000 tonnes of superfluous Hexachlorobenzene (HCB). It's particularly the positioning along the Dniester river that makes the situation extremely hazardous: a single flood and the high concentrations of poison would pollute the natural habitat of some 7 million people in the west of Ukraine and Moldavia.

In total, tens of millions of inhabitants in Europe, Central Asia and the former Soviet Union are being threatened by pesticides. In Ukraine alone there are 4,500 storage locations with more than 30,000 tonnes of old pesticides, a legacy from the Soviet era. The substances have been prohibited since 2001. As a rule the packaging only lasts five to ten years. If nothing happens in that time, then the substances could simply end up in the soil or in the water.

It's especially the rural population which is in danger, the IHPA reports. The WHO has estimated that in 2050 every second human being will die from cancer due to the contamination in food, water and the environment. A major portion will be caused by pesticides. There's also the threat of major financial losses. The relatively minor Nitrofen scandal (2002) in the former East Germany alone, cost a total of 500 million euro.

The IHPA estimates that the stabilization or destruction of all current stocks of superfluous pesticides amounts to 1 billion euro. In the final statement, the IHPA calls on the European Commission to make haste in developing a solid plan of action, in close cooperation with the EU member states, the non-EU countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and the relevant countries in Central Asia.

About IHPA (<http://www.ihpa.info>)

The International HCH & Pesticides Association (IHPA) is an independent and non-political network of committed individuals that wants to draw international attention on the world-wide problems stemming from the production and use of HCH and other obsolete pesticides and its dangers for human health and the environment. The IHPA has made its full commitment to use all its strength and know how to contribute actively to the solution of problems stemming from the production and use of HCH and other obsolete pesticides in Central European and EECCA (Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia) Countries.

SOURCE IHPA

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