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CLEEN network continues its successful European enforcement activities

One out of seven inspected products contained too much Cadmium. Almost half of the inspected cooling installations were leaking Ozone Depleting Substances into the atmosphere in serious quantities.

The European enforcement conference of CLEEN (Chemical Legislation European Enforcement Network) was organised from 10 – 13 September 2001 in Vienna, Austria. Enforcement results which were achieved within the operational CLEEN enforcement projects on Cadmium and Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) legislation expressed the value of a European approach in the enforcement of European chemicals legislation. A new European project will start on enforcement of legislation on classification and labelling of dangerous chemical preparations.

The CLEEN network

The CLEEN network has the goal to co-ordinate and improve enforcement of EU chemicals legislation. Representatives of inspectorates, customs and policy departments from the EU Member States and Norway were present at the conference, as well as a representative of the European Commission. A number of candidate European Member States attended the conference as well. Two operational projects within the CLEEN network are EuroCad (enforcement of the Cadmium Directive 91/338/EEC) and EurOzone (enforcement of the Ozone Depleting Substances regulation 2037/2000).

Results EuroCad project

The EuroCad project showed significant enforcement results. Cadmium is dangerous to health and the environment: it can be taken up by plants, including crops. Cadmium is known to cause serious damage to the kidneys. More than 500 samples were taken out of products, mostly imported from Far East countries and South East Asia. First outcomes show that one out of seven samples exceeded the Cadmium limit value of 100 mg/kg, as set by the Directive. Most of the products concerned PVC from bags, toys and premiums. About three-fourth of all products which exceeded the limit value were forced to be rejected to the country of origin. More results will be coming in the next months. The final project report will be available early next year. Enforcement will continue all over Europe.

Interim results EurOzone project

Increased concentrations of cooling agents (Ozone Depleting Substances such as CFC's) contribute to climate change and depletion of the ozone layer. Damages to the ozone layer have also implications for ecosystems and the occurrence of skin cancer.

Enforcement focussed on leakages from cooling installations and safe removal and destruction of cooling agents (ODS). Up to now cooling installations at more than 300 companies have been controlled on leakages. First results show that at almost 50% of all installations serious leakages have been detected. In about 15% of the cases, safe removal of CFC's was not guaranteed. Up to now about 60% of the companies inspected did not provide sufficient preventive maintenance. Also some first experiences and results of inspections related to illegal trade of CFC's were exchanged, in order to improve control and enforcement of illegal trade of ODS regulations. Inspections at companies will continue, and overall results will be presented at the next CLEEN conference.

Follow up activities

Besides the above mentioned follow up activities, agreements were made on a number of actions to be taken in the near future. A new "ECLIPS" project will start on the enforcement of legislation on classification and labelling of dangerous chemical preparations, as required by Directive 99/45/EEC. Almost all member states, Norway and some Candidate countries are interested to participate in this project.

The next CLEEN conference will be held in September 2002 in Copenhagen, Denmark. For more information see: www.cleen-europe.org