

Questionnaire on issues relating to the environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea.

Reply by the Republic of Latvia

Situation:

1.) *Is there an environmental risk for your country/region to be affected by waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea (WOCMDS)? If so, what are the environmental challenges and effects posed by WOCMDS?*

YES

There exists an environmental risk for Latvia by waste originating from chemical munitions dumped in the Baltic Sea. Information on environmental challenges can be obtained through the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)¹.

2.) *Does the scientific community in your country/region examine the environmental effects related to WOCMDS? If so, what are the findings of such scientific researches?*

NO

Response to incidents:

3.) *Does your country/region have the experience in responding to incidents related to WOCMDS?*

NO

4.) *Does your country/region have the capacity to respond to incidents related to WOCMDS?*

NO

5.) *Has your government/organization developed an action plan or built capacities to respond to incidents related to WOCMDS? If not, does your government/organization intend to do so in the future?*

NO

Latvia follows closely developments and conclusions within the Baltic Sea region targeted projects, like the Baltic Sea research project CHEMSEA². One of the goals for the CHEMSEA project is to develop a region-wide contingency plan to respond to major leakage incidents. Latvia also participates in the work of the HELCOM in this regard.

Raising awareness and other actions:

6.) *Does your government/organization provide information on WOCMDS to civil society and industry? Does your government raise awareness on WOCMDS and how?*

YES

¹ <http://www.helcom.fi>

² <http://www.chemsea.eu>

According to the HELCOM Guidelines there has been elaborated and published a handbook for fishermen "Fisheries and Warfare Agents: Preventive measures and first aid" in 1999. It has been distributed by the State Environmental Service among fisheries crews.

7.) *Are there any partnerships between government, industry and civil society in your country/region on raising awareness, reporting and monitoring of WOCMDS?*

YES

Fishermen have been invited to report on the caught dumped chemical munitions to the State Environmental Service.

Cooperation:

8.) *Does your government cooperate with other States, regional and/or international organizations to assess or increase awareness of WOCMDS?*

YES

Latvia cooperates closely with other states in the region within the framework of the HELCOM.

9.) *What would be, in your view, possible modalities for international cooperation to assess and increase awareness of WOCMDS?*

Latvia supports the cooperation primarily within the existing regional frameworks.