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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE Office supports conference promoting registers of pollutant release and transfers

DUSHANBE, 21 May 2009 - A conference that encouraged Central Asian countries to sign a protocol on pollutant release and transfer registers, supported by the OSCE, ended today in Dushanbe.

The OSCE Office in Tajikistan and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities supported the conference, which was organized by the European Commission and also supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

The Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) is part of the Aarhus Convention, which grants the public rights regarding access to information, public participation and access to justice in governmental decision-making processes on matters concerning the environment.

More than 40 participants, including representatives from governments and Aarhus Centres in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan attended the conference, along with several international and regional experts.

"I hope that this conference will support the signature and ratification of the PRTR protocol by Central Asian countries," said Klaus Rasmussen, Deputy Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. "This would help governments to set priorities for reducing or even eliminating the most potentially damaging pollutant releases and transfers."

Khursandmurod Zikirov, Chairman of the Tajik government's Environmental Protection Committee, highlighted the importance of the conference to "share experience on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention" and to "develop a strategy for the promotion of the PRTR in Central Asian countries".

Signing, ratifying and implementing the PRTR also helps government and industries implement other international conventions such as the Convention on Climate Change and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

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