

Newsletter

IMPEL-TFS

Seaport Project



European Union Net work for
the Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law

March 2004

1. Introduction

In October 2003, the first edition of the IMPEL-TFS Seaport Project was brought out. The results of the Rotterdam conference (4, 5 and 6 June 2003) were summarised in this first edition, as well as the project aims and planned enforcement actions.

This second edition presents some general inspection results so far, particular enforcement actions carried out by our network and the set up of and preparations for the second project meeting. Also the project proposal for a follow up project will be summarised, as well as other things worth knowing.

2. General results so far

Inspections within the framework of the project are carried out at this moment in an energetic way! Information and experiences are exchanged between all authorities, regulations on waste streams are checked and the first results are being received. A short overview of results and opinions from some participating countries:

Belgium

"OVAM started to implement the IMPEL-Seaport project guidelines from September 2003 on. During the last week of January 2004 the efforts of OVAM, Maritime Police of Antwerp and Antwerp Customs were focused on the inspection of containers, lorries and storage locations in the harbour of Antwerp. Inspection officers from Walloon region as well as police corpses from other Belgian harbours were invited to participate, in order to stimulate similar inspections in other locations in Belgium. The strengthening of the co-operation between Belgian inspection services is a first important national result of the IMPEL-Seaport project.

Although our officers were (are still are) invited to take part in inspections abroad, our lack of capacity prevents us from responding to these offers. We were glad to receive Dutch officers during our activities in the Antwerp harbour, and to exchange experiences on practical enforcement problems. The rigid TFS-reporting obligations forced us to adapt and improve our own reporting system.

Communication with other competent authorities stays informal but fluent and efficient for the most part".

More information: Bart Palmans, e-mail: bart.palmans@ovam.be

Latvia

"Enforcement activities during the Seaport project gave good results and new experiences for Latvia. One of the challenges for our Marine Environment Board was to start dealing with illegal waste shipment control in the Riga Free Port, because before this project we supervised other kinds of environmental problems. This project gives us the opportunity to expand our cooperation with the Riga Free Port, customs and other state authorities as well as shipping companies. Just after the first inspections within this project during December 2003, we recognize that it is necessary gradually to improve the



control of TFS regulations in our country. At the moment our priority is to establish better cooperation between State environmental authorities and customs in the Riga Free Port. Certainly it would be necessary to develop close cooperation also between the enforcement authorities of other EU countries. We are convinced that exchange of knowledge and experiences is the most important aspect for the enforcement of waste shipment regulations. Thanks to this IMPEL-TFS project we can arrange qualified waste inspections together with all state authorities involved. Exchange of information between local authorities and authorities from other EU countries during the project has been accelerated and facilitates better co-operation which leads to successful project realization. It is easier now to get and exchange information, to discuss, get publications and other

materials, also via internet with the Viadesk website. One of the issues which has to be tackled when finalizing the project will be lack of technical means to carry out efficient inspections in the Riga Free Port, which certainly is one of the weak points in our control system.

More information: Vairis Shantars (Marine Environment Protection Division, Chief Ecology Specialist) or Ojars Gerke, e-mail: ojars.gerke@jvp.org.lv

Exchange of inspectors (1)

"In the framework of the IMPEL-TFS seaport project, The Netherlands' VROM Inspectorate in Rotterdam invited colleagues of the Hamburg customs and the Hamburg environmental authorities. Two custom officers and one officer from the Behörde für Umwelt und Gesundheit came to Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on 25, 26 and 27 February. They joined a traffic inspection by the customs in the port of Rotterdam focussing on waste shipments and an inspection by the Harbour police and the environmental authorities (OVAM) in the port of Antwerp (Belgium). We compared working methods and talked about documentation, good codes, waste profiles and the computer systems of the customs in Rotterdam and Hamburg. During a visit to the port of Amsterdam (the Netherlands) we exchanged experiences concerning car wrecks and household goods. In these three days we also exchanged information about waste profiles and experiences on practical enforcement issues regarding for example old fridges, household waste, cooperation with involved authorities and other TFS issues in an informal setting. We enjoined the cooperation these three days with our colleagues from Hamburg and Antwerp. Thanks!"

Exchange of inspectors (2)

Dutch inspectors joined enforcement actions in the port of Antwerp (October 2003) and in Felixstowe (December 2003). A lack of capacity and finances appear to be important conditions for the exchange of inspectors. Latvia for example is only capable of inviting participating countries to take part in the inspections in the Port of Riga, instead of joining actions in other ports themselves. This means they are depending on the financial possibilities and willingness of other countries in order to participate in joint inspections.

More information: Arno Vink and Louis van der Ploeg, e-mail: louis.vanderploeg@minvrom.nl



3. Some specific enforcement actions

Household wastes from Ireland to India

During Winter 2003, illegal export of tonnes of Irish waste destined for India, Singapore and Indonesia was detected.

The waste, including some waste from local authority contractors, was detected by officials in the Rotterdam harbour. During spot checks household waste was discovered, instead of 'green declared paper waste' that would be recycled in Asia. A similar situation occurred in the Antwerp harbour. As a result, about 2.000 tonnes in 107 containers were sent back from Rotterdam and Antwerp to Ireland. A number of articles have been published in various newsletters in Belgium, Ireland and The Netherlands. More information and the articles itself can be found at the virtual "Viadesk" project website (see also below).

Computer scrap from UK to Pakistan

An illegal export of computer scrap from the United Kingdom to Pakistan was detected in the harbour of Felixstowe. Custom documents indicated that the shipment should contain plastic waste, but physical inspected turned out that the container contained of computer waste, more in particular computer screens. The export of this waste is prohibited by the Basel convention.

4. Second conference

As agreed at the last conference in Rotterdam, the second meeting will be held on 22 and 23 April 2004. The Flemish Public Waste Agency (OVAM) is willing to host this second project meeting. During this meeting the final results of enforcement actions and overall conclusions will be point of discussion. Also conclusions and recommendations will be discussed. These issues will form the basis for a project report that will be published during summer 2004. An invitation letter and additional information for the conference will be send to the project participants on short term.

Waste firms may be prosecuted

FRANK McDONALD,
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

Several Irish companies could face prosecution over the unlicensed export of waste to Belgium and the Netherlands.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last night said it was investigating illegal movement of waste in recent weeks.

The container loads of waste, which included municipal refuse, were ordered to be returned to Ireland by the authorities in the

Netherlands. A total of 51 containers have been returned.

A further 40 to 80 containers are being held in Antwerp, although the EPA said the Belgian authorities had not yet requested its assistance in the matter.

The EPA said nine local authorities involved were assisting in its inquiries. They are Waterford, Cork, Clare, Fingal, South Tipperary, Galway and Kerry county councils as well as Dublin and Limerick city councils.

The returned waste was sent back to the companies from where it came and was being inspected by the local authorities.

The companies could face prosecution under regulations on the illegal movement of waste.

The companies named by the EPA were Samshire Recycling Ltd, Lismore, Co Waterford; Barna Waste Disposal and Recycling Ltd, Galway; Clean (IRE) Refuse Recycling Ltd, Clare; Kilarney Waste, Co Kerry, and Country Clean, Cork.

5. Virtual project web

During January 2004, The Netherlands VROM-Inspectorate introduced a virtual project web for this project, called Viadesk. Viadesk introduces a virtual project room for all project members via intranet; access is only possible with a username and password. It contains relevant documents, e-mails and a platform for discussion. It stimulates an open and fast way of communicating with each other. With an internet connection you always have access to all information on the IMPEL-TFS Seaport project, no matter where you are.

More information about Viadesk be gained at the project management (for contact information: see below).

6. Follow up IMPEL-TFS Seaport project

There is a strong need to intensify and to enlarge the established cooperation. This is the reason that The Netherlands VROM-Inspectorate has drawn up a project proposal (Terms of Reference) for a follow up project. The TOR was approved at the plenary IMPEL meeting in Rome (November 2003).

Besides the current project participants, other relevant IMPEL-TFS countries will be invited to join the follow up project. In particular, the enforcement authorities of the ports of Le Havre (France) and Dublin (Ireland) will be asked to participate, because of their geographical location with regard to transport of waste. The follow up project will also focus on the enlargement of the number of seaports within participating countries. The preparation for this project will start directly after the current project. A first conference will be organised in September 2004. The operational phase of the project is foreseen from October 2004 till March 2005. The final results of the project will be point of discussion at a second and last conference, foreseen in April 2005. Malta already confirmed their participation in this project. Ireland and Italy have shown interest to join this project as well.

More information about this project proposal can be gained at the project management (for contact information: see below).

7. Things worth knowing

- In December 2003 an interim report on the IMPEL-TFS Seaport project was published. The report describes the results of the project up till December 2003;
- The IMPEL-TFS Seaport project was mentioned on the electronic news service on ozone protection and implementation of the Montreal Protocol (OzoNews), by the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme (Paris). See therefore: www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/compliance/ozonews/04Feb17.html#3;
- In their latest newsletter INECE (an informal network of over 2500 environmental enforcers worldwide) mentioned the IMPEL-TFS Seaport project. See therefore <http://inece.org/newsletter/9/enforcement.html>;
- A third edition of this newsletter is foreseen in May 2004;
- More common information about the IMPEL-TFS Seaport project can be found at: www2.minvrom.nl/docs/international/Info_IMPEL_TFS_project_eng.pdf

For more information about above-mentioned issues, please send a email to nancy.isarin@minvrom.nl.

Colophon

Final editor: Nancy Isarin
VROM Inspectorate
P.O.box 29 036
3001 GA Rotterdam
The Netherlands
nancy.isarin@minvrom.nl
Editing: ARCADIS
Date: March 2004

Country	Contact person	Tel nr.	Email	Contact
Belgium	Mr Marc de Strooper	+32 15 284353	Marc.de.strooper@ovam.be	
Germany	Mr Klaus Willke	+49 40 428452249	Klaus.willke@bug.hamburg.de	
Latvia	Mr Ojars Gerke	+371 7465575	Ojars.Gerke@jvp.gov.lv	
Netherlands	Mr Huib van Westen	+31 10 2244306	Huib.vanwesten@minvrom.nl	
Poland	Mrs Magda Gosk	+48 22 5792729	mgosk@pios.gov.pl	
United Kingdom	Mr Lyndon Essex	+44 14 73 706717	Lyndon.essex@environment-agency.gov.uk	

BBC NEWS

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1.000 ton illegaal afval onderschept in Antwerpse haven

van Rotterdam. Die waarschuwe alle havens van het Europese Seaport Project, een netwerk van milieuhavens die afvalcontroles uitvoeren in zeehavens. De Openbare Vlaamse Afvalmaatschappij (Ovam) en de Antwerpse politie hielden de containers vast op de terugreis van Rotterdam. Die waarschuwe alle havens van het Europese Seaport Project, een netwerk van milieuhavens die afvalcontroles uitvoeren in zeehavens. De Openbare Vlaamse Afvalmaatschappij (Ovam) en de Antwerpse politie hielden de containers vast op de terugreis van Rotterdam.

Omdat de voorafgaandelijke waarschuwingsprocedure voor de export van zulke afvalstoffen niet werd gerespecteerd, weigerde de federale Leefmilieu Inspectie een vergunning tot doorvoer af te geven. De 56 containers staan nog in de Antwerpse haven maar zouden zo snel mogelijk teruggevoerd worden naar Ierland. Van de 56 onderschepte containers zouden er zeventien afkomstig zijn van een Ierse firma en de rest van een Nederlandse firma. Het afval komt uit Ierland omdat het daar niet gescheiden en gestort er duur is. 'Afvalhandelaars' exporteren daarom Iers afval naar Aziatische derde landen.

Illegal dumping sites tackled

Mike McKimm
BBC Northern Ireland environment correspondent

The growing level of illegal dumping into Northern Ireland from across the Irish border is to be tackled by a special team.

The Department of Environment, which aims to catch the people behind this practice, said it was uncovering up to two illegal sites in Northern Ireland each week.

It is believed there are dozens of illegal dump sites containing tens of thousands of tons of rotting rubbish from household bins and industry across Ireland.

Tonnes of illegal India-bound waste shipped back to Ireland

Treacy Hogan
Environment Correspondent

THOUSANDS of tonnes of Irish waste destined for India is being sent back here because it was exported illegally. The waste, including some from local authority contractors, was seized by officials in Rotterdam en route to India and Singapore, the *Irish Independent* has exclusively learned.

During a spot check, Dutch officials discovered smelly household waste instead of 'green' paper due to be recycled in Asia.

When they opened the containers, disgusted officials were met by a mountain of plastic bottles, carpets, wood, cosmetic packaging and food residues. The Dutch immediately

branded the shipments "illegal". The disclosure is proving hugely embarrassing for the country's local authorities who have all been severely rebuked by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Government.

The revelation has led to every local authority nationwide being ordered to change its procedures over trans-frontier waste shipments, it was also learned. Almost 1,000 tonnes in 40 containers were sent back from Rotterdam. The containers were shipped by three brokers from eight different waste contractors in eight council areas.

Another major consignment of waste has just been found in Antwerp and it has also been mislabelled and is

expected to be returned to Ireland. Charges may be brought against the companies responsible by the Dutch Environment Ministry.

An Environmental Protection Agency spokesperson said some cause for concern was that some of the companies contracted by local authorities to carry out recycling while private contractors were also involved. Both the EPA and the Department of the Environment (DOE) have written to all local authorities "about the specific issue of recent shipments of illegal shipments of mixed household waste from Ireland".

"It's a classification issue and we've been telling local authorities that there has to be certainty in this area. We've written to them to remind them," noted a DOE spokesman.

in Azië wordt gedumpt, metaal, resten, teruggestuurd. Volgens de documenten bestond de lading uit hout, blik tot schoenen en voedsel, oud papier, zei VROM. Ierland exporteert steeds meer huishoudelijk afval. Volgens de bevoegde autoriteiten in Ierland zijn de containers met het illegale afval op de terugreis van Rotterdam. De Nederlandse douane heeft de containers vastgehouden op de terugreis van Rotterdam. De Nederlandse douane heeft de containers vastgehouden op de terugreis van Rotterdam. De Nederlandse douane heeft de containers vastgehouden op de terugreis van Rotterdam.