

Dear co-chairs,

the European Union and its Member States are fully committed to ensuring the sound management of chemicals and waste.

We see the sound management of chemicals and waste as an objective fully in its own right since it is crucial for the protection of human health and the environment. It is, however, important to recall that striving for this important goal is also key for a safe circular economy and is an important contribution to improving the sustainability of our way of life in general.

We would like to stress the importance of this intersessional process under SAICM for the development of an enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, also with a view to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030.

The EU and its Member States support moving from general discussions to the preparation of concrete recommendations on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. This will require the drafting of such recommendations, which started at OEWG3 in Montevideo last spring and was advanced mainly in relation to the vision and five strategic objectives. Therefore, it is important to focus the work of this meeting on the development of detailed recommendations on a number of remaining items, to be submitted for consideration at ICCM5.

We understand that the objective of the thematic discussions at this meeting is the drafting of such recommendations. In this context we are of the view that the mandate of any setting created for drafting should be sufficiently broad as to allow input from all stakeholders

It will be important for the EU and its Member States to reach agreement on recommendations addressing the main elements of each issue of the thematic discussions. From our view, further development of the content of the recommendations may be done subsequently, e.g. during future meetings of the intersessional process. Such development would also be easier once the main elements have been agreed.

The EU and its Member States welcome the independent evaluation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals management from 2006-2015. We should take the outcome of this report into consideration in all our discussions during this and future meetings to ensure that the strengths are strengthened and the weaknesses are addressed, so that our future work in the area of sound management of chemicals and waste provides the necessary contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dear co-chairs, the EU and its Member States see the enabling framework beyond 2020 as being of central importance to reach several targets of the Sustainable Development Goals which are directly related to the sound management of chemicals and waste. We therefore look forward to this week's hard work as a great opportunity to take big steps towards our goal.

Thank you very much for your attention!