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**Central and Eastern Europe Regional Briefing**  
7 September 2021, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. CET

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL BRIEFING**

#### **1. Welcome and introduction**

The Bureau Members for the Central and Eastern Europe welcomed all participants, the ICCM5 President, Ms. Anita Breyer, the IP Co-chair, Ms Judith Torres, as well as the SAICM Coordinator, Ms. Nalini Sharma. He thanked the SAICM Secretariat for organising this Regional Briefing.

Mr. Domagalski and Mr. Lenev explained that the ICCM5 Bureau at its last meeting agreed to convene Regional Briefings in early September 2021. The objectives of these briefings are: (i) to inform the regions on the results of the survey on the design of the future virtual work; (ii) for the IP Co-chairs to present the way forward in the Intersessional Process; (iii) to give the regions the opportunity to provide feedback to the SAICM Secretariat and the IP Co-chairs; and (iv) to give the regions the opportunity to discuss their perspectives among themselves.

The [Regional Briefings Concept Note](#) was circulated on 17 August 2021 and is available on the SAICM website. Mr. Domagalski introduced the meeting agenda and reminded all participants that the Co-facilitators of the four Virtual Working Groups (VWGs) have provided video recordings on the outcomes of the VWG process held between October 2020 and February 2021, and hoped that participants have watched these recordings in order to be well informed for the discussions during the briefing. The recordings are available on the [SAICM website](#) under “Outputs & Recordings” for each VWG.

#### **2. Presentation of survey results**

The SAICM Coordinator, Ms. Sharma presented the results of the Survey on stakeholders’ experiences of the Virtual Working Group Process held between October 2020 and February 2021. The [full report](#) including the raw data of the survey responses as well as a [summary](#) of survey responses are available on the [SAICM website](#).

Mr. Domagalski thanked Ms Sharma for the presentation on the survey results and opened the floor for questions and comments.

#### **3. Moving forward**

Mr. Domagalski gave the floor to the IP Co-chair, Ms. Torres, noting that the second IP Co-chair, Mr. David Morin could not attend this briefing due to national elections that are currently taking place in Canada.

Ms. Torres referred to the four videos of the VWGs Co-facilitators summarizing the outcomes of each VWG to inform stakeholders and foster discussions during this regional briefing. She noted that the objective of the VWG process was to maintain the momentum and to advance discussions as COVID-19 prevented SAICM stakeholders from meeting face-to-face at IP4 and ICCM5. Thereafter, she presented [Elements for discussion](#)

[on the Intersessional Process moving forward](#) including three guiding questions to facilitate the exchange of regional perspectives. She pointed out that the feedback from the regions would be very important for the design of the next steps in the Intersessional Process towards IP4 and noted that the IP Co-chairs will take into account the views expressed during the VWGs, as well as the results from the survey, and the outcomes of the regional briefings. With that, she thanked the participants in advance for their valuable contributions to this process and referred to the three questions to be discussed under the next agenda item.

#### **4. Questions and Answers on Moving forward**

Mr. Domagalski presented the three questions proposed by the IP Co-chairs to guide the exchange of regional perspectives and opened the floor for comments.

- 1) How can we take the best advantage of this time to move the work forward to contribute to a successful outcome when we are able to meet face to face at IP4?
- 2) Considering the outcomes of the work to date, what would be the top priorities for your region to advance the work in preparation for IP4? What type of schedule/level of work would be manageable for participants?
- 3) Are there any gaps in terms of areas in need of further discussion but not identified in document IP.4/2 Compilation of recommendations regarding the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 and discussions during the VWGs?

Mr. Alexandru Roznov, from the Romanian Ministry of Environment, reminded the participants that Romania profits of one of the fastest internet connections and since we don't know how the pandemic would evolve some countries might not be able to enter Romania in the following months, for these reason we believe that an IP4 in an hybrid form with its presential part in Romania is the most effective solution for today.

Ms. Katerina Sebkoba, from the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for Capacity-building and the Transfer of Technology, Check Republic, supported what the delegate from Romania said regarding the possibility of hybrid organisation of meetings. She emphasised that the virtual process needs to continue because chemicals in the world do not stop in COVID times and she asked if there are any timelines for having IP4 and ICCM5 meetings.

The CEE Regional Representative mentioned that based on his own experience in hybrids meetings people experience similar problems than in online meeting. Negotiations are not possible, but we could consider information meetings. This would be the position of Russia.

#### **5. Closing remarks**

Ms. Breyer thanked the region for the opportunity to present herself and expressed her honour to have been nominated by Germany to serve in the role of President of ICCM5. Ms. Breyer stated that she has served in several roles in the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety in Germany, including 1½ years of “apprenticeship” in chemicals management when she supported the negotiations on the Stockholm Convention in Bonn in the year 2000. Since 2020, she holds the position Director-General for Immission Control, Transport, Safety of Installations, Chemical Safety and Environmental Health.

She began her remarks by reiterating Germany's firm commitment to hosting a successful ICCM5 whenever global in-person meetings are feasible. In the interim, however, she made clear that we cannot allow the virus to keep us from making progress. She highlighted, that the sound management of chemicals and waste would be vital and integral to address challenges which have deteriorated due to the pandemic, such as poverty, inequality and food insecurity.

Ms. Breyer pointed out that full and inclusive participation in the Intersessional Process and at ICCM5 is the common vision and ambition, and that she, in close consultation with the ICCM5 Bureau, is continuously assessing the situation worldwide. However, at this stage, it would be too early to determine dates for a face-to-face IP4 and ICCM5. In the meantime, she reiterated the need to adapt to the current circumstances and proceed virtually, understanding that it presents challenges to all stakeholders and that such a tremendous learning process does not come without failures and fall-backs that we can learn from.

She thanked all stakeholders for their continuing support of this process and pointed out how valuable the region's feedback is for designing the next phase of the virtual work, and that their perspectives will be considered. She ended by expressing her excitement to work with all stakeholders on the journey towards a successful ICCM5.

## **6. Regional perspectives**

Mr. Lenev explained that this agenda item served as an open forum to share regional perspectives on what has been heard so far during this Regional Briefing and to discuss possible ways forward from the Central and Eastern Europe regional perspective.

The SAICM Regional Representative took as an example the 5th UNEA Assembly that is planned for the end of February 2022. He said that we still don't know if it will be held in an hybrid or face-to-face format. The majority believe it should be face-to-face because negotiating is very difficult in an online or hybrid way. The Regional Representative also mentioned that during UNEA 5 session there will be a resolution on chemicals probably around a scientific platform for discussion and we should try to influence this. He then opened the floor for comments.

Ms. Irma Gurguliani, from Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, said that since it is difficult to have a face-to-face meeting, new solutions need to come forward based on the example of UNEA 5. Hybrid meetings will not work well. She also said that Georgia would like to be more involved in the IP process.

Ms. Claudia Dimitru from the Romanian Ministry of Environment said that they had a new president during the OEWG3 meeting in Montevideo and showed the rest of the regions that the CEE Region is very engaged and decided to fight to have this IP4 meeting in Bucharest. She said that the meeting was prepared at 90% when the postponement was decided but she pointed out that the meeting was not cancelled.

The Romanian representative believed that hybrid meetings can still work if we adapt appropriately like for example limiting the attendance to 2 delegates per delegation to allow space in the meeting room. The internet connection in Romania is the highest possible and livestream should be available for delegates in all meetings so all can access any room. The Triple BRS COP did not work that well, and the platform was not performing at the highest level but regarding the Montreal Protocol many documents were prepared and approved on time. Finance, of course, is another issue that needs to be considered on organising the meetings.

The CEE Regional representative thanked the Romanian representative for helping to keep the process alive but mentioned that from his point of view hybrid meetings are difficult to manage because good internet connection need to be available also on the other side not only at the Romanian side.

Mr. Szymon Domagalski, CCE Bureau member, supported the idea of having live stream solutions including for face-to-face meetings but alerted about additional costs for this service.

Finally, Ms. Claudia Dimitru suggested to the CEE representatives to send an email to the region to seek views on IP4 organisation before the next Bureau meeting.

Mr. Lenev thanked all participants for their active engagement in this meeting, and the SAICM Secretariat for the organization of the briefing and their support during this briefing.

He closed the Central and Eastern Europe Regional Briefing at 4 p.m. CET.

