Danish delegation. 29 October 1999.


Agenda point: **LRTAP Protocols on POP’s and Heavy Metals**

**LRTAP: Protocols on POP’s and Heavy Metals**

1. The protocols on International Actions on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP’s) and Heavy Metals under the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution were signed in Aarhus, Denmark on 24 June 1998 by the European Union and 35 countries.

   The signatories were, in addition to the EU,
   Armenia
   Austria
   Belgium
   Bulgaria
   Canada
   Croatia
   Cyprus
   Czech Republic
   Denmark
   Finland
   France
   Germany
   Greece
   Hungary
   Iceland
   Ireland
   Italy
   Latvia
   Liechtenstein
   Lithuania
   Luxembourg
   Netherlands
   Norway
   Poland
   Portugal
   Republic of Moldova
   Romania
   Slovakia
   Slovenia
   Spain
   Sweden
   Switzerland
   Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America

The protocols will enter into force after sixteenth country deposits its instrument of ratification.

As of 1 October 1999 only Canada has ratified the protocols.

The process of ratification is thus disappointingly slow.

2. It is generally agreed that it is important, not least for the Arctic region, that the protocols enter into force as soon as possible.

As a consequence the Nordic countries have decided, at a meeting on 23 August 1999 between the Nordic environment ministers, that the Nordic countries

- should pursue an early ratification and
- should aim at an implementation of the provisions of the protocols before the formal entry into force of the protocols

3. The Arctic Council, with its general and specific tasks in relation to the Arctic environment, have a special responsibility in furthering the process of ratification of the two protocols.

This question was specifically dealt with in point 18 of the Iqaluit Declaration, which reads:

"Agree to work vigorously for the early ratification and implementation of the Protocols on the elimination or reduction of discharge, emissions and losses of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and of Heavy Metals under the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. We encourage other states to do the same, with the aim to bring the Protocols into force as early as possible. We fully support regional co-operation to facilitate the delivery of measures that are needed to meet the obligations of the protocols on POPs and Heavy Metals;"

4. The purpose of including this question to the agenda of the SAO-meeting in November 1999 is not only to take stock of the situation with regard to the ratification among Arctic Council countries, but also to discuss how the Arctic Council as a forum and through its Chair can encourage other states to sign and ratify the LRTAP protocols on POPs and Heavy Metals.