

Nordic proposal on the phasing out of hazardous chemicals within one generation

submitted by Denmark

Background

On behalf of the Nordic countries, The Nordic Ministers for Environment at their meeting on August 23. 1999, entrusted Denmark with the task of developing a joint Nordic proposal on the phasing out of hazardous chemicals within one generation to be presented at the upcoming PAME meeting in Iceland, November 1.-4. 1999.

Reason for action - Scientific evidence

Reference is made to findings from the AMAP programme and subsequent publications.

Proposed action

Based on the serious findings of hazardous substances in many parts of the Arctic marine environment it is suggested to copy the proactive and progressive initiatives from other parts of the world in order to co-operate with other regions in their endeavour to safeguard the marine environment and the Arctic in particular.

It is suggested as a first step that the meeting of PAME adopt the principle of phasing out hazardous chemicals within one generation or at a given date 2020 at the latest as decided within the OSPAR Convention. The following text based at the Sintra Statement last year could serve as text to be elaborated with a view for its formal adoption at the coming meeting of the Arctic Council.

"WE AGREE to prevent pollution of the maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances (that is, substances which are toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulate or which give rise to an equivalent level of concern), with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.

WE SHALL MAKE every endeavour to move towards the target of cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by the year 2020.

WE EMPHASISE the importance of the precautionary principle in this work.

WE INVITE other states, international organisations, industry and other NGOs to join us in these efforts to achieve this target.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE the need to provide consumer and purchaser with information on hazardous substances in goods thereby promoting the reduction of risks from the use of such chemicals, and

WE WILL DEVELOP, individually or jointly, further means for disseminating this information.”