



UNEP



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**Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed
Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous
Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
Chemical Review Committee**

First meeting

Geneva, 11–18 February 2005

Item 7 (m) of the provisional agenda*

**Inclusion of chemicals in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention:
Review of notifications of final regulatory actions to ban
or severely restrict a chemical: Chrysotile asbestos**

Chrysotile asbestos: supporting documentation from Switzerland

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat has the honour to provide, in the annex to the present note, the supporting documentation received from Switzerland in support of its notification of final regulatory action on chrysotile asbestos.

* UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.1/1.

Annex

Chrysotile Focused Summary of the Notification of a Final Regulatory Action by Switzerland

I. Introduction

Asbestos was considered to be a hazard and grave risk to workers and consumers. It was therefore banned in 1986. The ban includes chrysotile (white asbestos), crocidolite (blue asbestos), amosite (brown asbestos), actinolite, anthophyllite and tremolite asbestos.

The ban stipulates that asbestos shall no longer be used, except to manufacture products or articles which may be supplied or imported as commercial goods in accordance with Annex 3.3 of the Ordinance relating to Environmentally Hazardous Substances (SR 814.013).

The specified conditions are:

If the intended use is subject to the provisions and exemptions of Annex 3.3 of the Ordinance relating to Environmentally Hazardous Substances.

Exemptions:

1. On reasoned request, the Federal Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape may permit a manufacturer or trader to continue to supply certain products or articles or to import them as commercial goods after the dates laid down in Annex 3.3, Number 31 if:

- a. according to the state of the art, there is no replacement substance for the asbestos and provided that no more than the minimum amount of asbestos necessary for the desired purpose is employed, or
- b. due to particular design conditions, only spare parts containing asbestos can be used

Labeling:

Manufacturers may only supply packing drums and packaging for asbestos, products or articles containing asbestos and unpackaged products or articles containing asbestos if they carry a label giving the information laid out in Annex 3.3, Number 33 of the Ordinance relating to Environmentally Hazardous Substances.

All other provisions stated in Annex 3.3 apply equally.

II. Risk Evaluation

Chrysotile was considered to be hazardous to the health of workers and the general public by the experts from the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape and the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health due to the increased risks for asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. The experts evaluated findings published in Switzerland and other countries before 1986 but did not perform a specific national risk evaluation or assessment. The Ordinance relating to Environmentally Hazardous Substances was amended, asbestos being added directly to Annex 3.3.

III. Risk Reduction and Relevance to other States

There is currently no information on the quantities of asbestos imported into Switzerland at the time of the ban.

Exemptions are regularly given for asbestos products (gaskets used in certain machines) for which no replacement exists.