

Ref.: BS/EDM/KGM/jh

12 November 2001

NOTIFICATION

Madam/Sir,

**Re: Central and Eastern European Regional Meeting on capacity-building
for the Biosafety Clearing-House
(to be held back-to-back with the UNEP-GEF regional workshop on biosafety)
5-9 February 2002, Nitra, Slovak Republic**

As you may be aware, Article 20 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes a Biosafety Clearing-House as part of the clearing-house mechanism under Article 18, paragraph 3, of the Convention, in order to facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms; and to assist Parties to implement the Protocol.

At the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP), the Executive Secretary was requested to analyze the identified capacity-building and financial requirements of the developing countries, in particular the least developed and small island developing states among them, and countries with economies in transition, as well as countries that are centres of origin and centres of genetic diversity, to enable their active participation in the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House. In support of this objective, a regional meeting will be convened for the Central and Eastern European States, in Nitra, Slovak Republic, with the generous support of the Government of the United States of America, and following the kind offer of the Government of the Slovak Republic to host such a meeting, to provide countries of the region with an opportunity to express their needs and expectations with regard to the establishment of the pilot phase, and also to provide training on the use of the Biosafety Clearing-House.

This regional meeting will be held jointly with the UNEP-GEF regional workshop on biosafety, which will focus both on increasing awareness of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and on the development of national biosafety frameworks in the countries of the region. These meetings will be held from **5 to 9 February 2002**. According to the provisional agenda, it is envisioned that 5 February will be a joint introductory day, 6 to 7 February will focus on national biosafety frameworks and 8 to 9 February will focus on the Biosafety Clearing-House.

Each CEE country Party to the Convention will have the opportunity to send two participants to the two meetings: one to be supported by the CBD Secretariat and one to be supported by UNEP-GEF.

To: CBD National Focal Points – CEE Region
Cc: ICCP Focal Points – CEE Region

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Accordingly, I would like to invite Parties and Governments to **nominate one** participant for the meeting **to be supported by the CBD Secretariat**, preferably qualified in one of the following fields: management of biosafety-related issues (such as notifications for decision-making); information-sharing systems and database-management; and/or experience with the clearing-house mechanism of the CBD. The provisional agendas for the meeting is attached, the annotated agenda will follow shortly. Please note that the meeting will be held in English and Russian.

The Secretariat will support the participation of **one** representative from each Central and Eastern European country Party to the Convention. This includes a round-trip air ticket on the most economical and direct route and a Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for the duration of the meetings. Countries that wish to solicit such assistance are requested to provide the required information on the enclosed nomination form and forward it to the Secretariat before **Friday, 21 December 2001**.

Please contact UNEP-GEF directly regarding the support for the other participant in the meetings.

In order to further assist the deliberations of this workshop, Parties, Governments and relevant organizations are kindly requested to submit their views and needs with regard to the operation of the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as any other relevant information they may wish to convey to the Secretariat prior to the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Hamdallah Zedan
Executive Secretary

Enclosure: Participant nomination form
Provisional agenda for the meeting on the Biosafety Clearing-House



CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/BCH/CEE.Reg/1/1

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL MEETING ON THE BIOSAFETY CLEARING- HOUSE

Nitra, 5, 8-9 February 2002

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Organizational matters:
 - 2.1. Election of officers;
 - 2.2. Adoption of the agenda;
 - 2.3. Organization of work.
3. Issues for in-depth consideration:
 - 3.1. Information exchange under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and implementation of the Biosafety Clearing-House;
 - 3.2. Evaluation of existing biodiversity and biosafety information-exchange mechanisms in Central and Eastern Europe, and opportunities for facilitating information exchange under the Protocol;
 - 3.3. Pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House: overview and training session.
4. Preparation of regional needs assessments and priorities for action.
5. Other matters.
6. Conclusions and recommendations.
7. Adoption of the report.
8. Closure of the meeting.
