*Ljubljana, October 2019*

**OHCHR Report on the theme "Realizing children's rights through a healthy environment" pursuant to the HRC Resolution 40/14 – Input by SLOVENIA**

1. Please share any information or evidence on the impact of environmental degradation, pollution or childhood exposure to hazardous substances on children's rights, including the right to health

In Slovenia, we have two hot spots of environmental degradation, namely the Meža valley and the basin of Celje.  The problem is contaminated soil with heavy metals like lead in Meža valley and cadmium in the town of Celje, as a consequence of heavy industry in the past. The most vulnerable group for exposure are children. Slovenia has in place a wide range of general and specific measures to prevent children exposure to these chemicals. In the Meža valley a systematic biomonitoring for children aged 3 years, and other preventive program has been going on since 2007. In the basin of Celje a lot has already been done to protect children from the environmental hazards. The amount of lead in the blood of children has decreased significantly since the monitoring has been established.

Outdoor air pollution has been a problem in the municipality of Zagorje by Sava river, where many factories emit a lot of PM of different sizes and other air pollutants. Preventive measures have been going on to protect children's health.

1. Please identify noteworthy and globally significant examples of good practice towards ensuring children's rights through a healthy environment, including good practices to mitigate childhood exposures to harmful levels of air pollution and hazardous substances, such as pesticides or other toxic chemicals

In the Meža valley a preventive program for protecting children's' health has been going on since 2007, which is especially designed toward avoiding children from chemical exposure to lead. The program has been implemented in kindergartens and schools, as well as in private homes. Local people are informed about the dangers the exposure brings and prevention, for example, regularly cleaning the houses, replacing contaminated soil with new uncontaminated soil, growing of vegetables in uncontaminated soil, covering roads with asphalt and grass, etc.  Children aged 3 years are annually invited for biomonitoring for the level of lead in blood.

In the basin of Celje, the preventive program is also implemented. Children and their parents are informed through web pages, and other promotional material, how to cope with exposure to harmful substances like cadmium. Kindergartens are involved in preventive programs in the region and replacing of contaminated soil has just begun. The Ministry of environment financially supports these programmes.

In Zasavje region a big factory, which emitted a lot of PMs and other outdoor air pollutants, was closed down in the year 2011. Other factories have taken preventive measures against air pollution in the region.

1. What legal and other measures are in place to ensure that the activities of companies do not damage the environment, either domestically or in other countries?

 National legislation consists of:

-          Decree on activities and installations causing large-scale environmental pollution

-          Air pollution:

* Decree on the emission of substances into the atmosphere from stationary sources of pollution,
* Rules on initial measurements and operational monitoring of the emission of substances into the atmosphere from stationary pollution sources and on the conditions for their implementation

-          Water pollution:

* Decree on the emission of substances and heat when discharging waste water into waters and the public sewage system

-          Noise pollution:

* Decree on limit values for environmental noise indicators, Decree on the assessment and management of environmental noise

-          Light pollution:

* Decree on limit values due to light pollution of environment

-          Waste management:

* Decree on waste

-          Dangerous substances:

* Decree on the prevention of major accidents and mitigation of their consequences as well as the European REACH and CPL regulation on putting chemicals on the market,
* legislation on Biocides, Plant protection products, etc.

1. What are the main gaps and challenges experienced in this regard?

The main gaps are associated with lengthy procedures for amending legislation.

The main challenges are associated with rapid development of technologies and substances in these technologies processes, which causes different emissions.

1. Please provide information on national laws and policies to ensure that companies undertake environmental and human rights due diligence and do not contribute to abuses of children's rights.
2. What measures are in place to combat hazardous forms of child labour in which children are at particular risk of exposure to hazardous and toxic substances?

In 2015 Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia for the health of children and adolescents in relation to the environment (2012-2020) was adopted (Action Plan 2014-2020).

The environmental legislation is described in the answer under question nr 3. With regard the human rights due diligence the Employment Relationships Act is in place.

Employment Relationships Act (national legislation): The work of children under the age of 15 is prohibited. Workers under the age of 18 enjoy special protection in employment.

A worker who is not yet 18 years of age should not be allowed to:

* work carried out underground or underwater,
* work that objectively exceeds his physical and psychological abilities,
* work involving harmful exposure to factors that are toxic, carcinogens, which cause hereditary genetic damage or harm to the unborn child or otherwise have a chronic effect on human health,
* work involving harmful radiation exposure,
* work involving the risk of accidents that cannot be identified or avoided by a young person due to their lack of attention to safety or lack of experience or training,
* work involving health risks from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.

Numerous activities has been carried out to raise the awareness on child labour, especially in relation to trafficking in human beings (i.e. awareness-raising and preventive workshops and other activities in primary and secondary schools). Among other activities is also a small exhibition entitled "Children without Childhood" (prepared by the Government Communication Office with the City Museum Ljubljana in connection with the exhibition "A new era is coming! Industry – Work – Capital"). The exhibition showed posters on the theme of child labour in the world selected in the competition for primary schools and families by the participants in the project "Museum in Miniature".

1. What measures are in place to fulfil children's right to participate and be heard in decisions affecting their rights and environment, including their right to effective remedy in the case of violations of their rights linked to pollution or exposures to hazardous substances?

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1. How are environmental risks to children being monitored and measured in your country?

In Meža valley the human biomonitoring (levels of lead in the blood) of children 3 years old has been going regularly on since 2007. The protocol of biomonitoring of the blood levels of heavy metals, for school aged children across all Slovenia is being now prepared and will begin in the next year.

In Celje basin measures of soil pollution especially cadmium and other toxic metals is going on.

On the web pages, Slovenian Environment Agency permanently publishes the data about air pollution across all Slovenia and early warning system is established. The information how to deal with high concentrations of air pollutants in the outdoor air is added.

Drinking water monitoring is laid down in the Rules on Drinking Water (Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 19/2004, 35/2004, 26/2006, 92/2006, 25/2009, 74/2015 and 51/2017). The aim of this monitoring is to verify the compliance of drinking water with the requirements set out in the Rule, in order to protect people’s health against harmful effects resulting from any type of drinking water pollution.

The Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (hereinafter: AFSVSPP) performs administrative and expert tasks and official controls covering the quality, safety and labelling of agricultural products and foodstuffs, including genetically modified foods.