
IS15. PROTECTING HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT FROM CHEMICALS – WHO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE PERSPECTIVE

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WHO Regional Office for Europe, through WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO ECEH) contributes to the implementation of some global initiatives in the area of chemical safety, especially through to the implementation of multilateral global and regional agreements, such as Strategic Approach to Chemicals management (SAICM), International Health Regulations (IHR), and Parma Declaration on Environment and Health and encouraging national governments and international organizations to develop policies and strengthen legislation to protect human health and the environment from negative impacts of chemicals.

In the sustainable development perspective, the chemicals and health agenda needs to expand beyond addressing immediate health impacts of exposures, to take into account indirect implications of chemicals throughout their life cycle, including resource use, controlling occupational and environmental exposures, while enhancing healthy workplaces and fair social conditions. The assessment performed by WHO ECEH in 2015, showed that only few countries specifically addressed exposures and risks prevention from priority carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic chemicals and endocrine disrupting chemicals, and less than half of the countries have a legal basis for prohibition of use of dangerous chemicals in products destined to children and protection of places where children learn and play.

Promoting consideration of human health impacts of chemicals throughout their life-cycle in a sustainability perspective is of utmost importance. Exploring health, environmental and social benefits of the sustainable production and use of chemicals in line with a ‘non-toxic environment’ concept should pave the way forward.

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