

**COMMON FORUM on
Contaminated Land in Europe
October 22, 2019
Lima / Peru**

MEETING REPORT



The CF 2019 Lima, Peru meeting was attended by:

Ceenaeme	Johan	Belgium
De Cleen	Margot	The Netherlands
Frauenstein	Jörg	Germany
Guérin	Valérie	France
Hasznos	Gabor	Hungary
Molenaar	Co	The Netherlands
Müller-Grabherr	Dietmar	Austria
Radiene	Rasa	Lithuania
Reinikainen	Jussi	Finland
Wepner-Banko	Martha	Austria
Wermeille	Christiane	Switzerland

Note: Handouts of presentations from this meeting are available for download at www.commonforum.eu

Session 1 – WELCOME ADDRESS

The Autumn 2019 meeting of Common Forum was held back to back with:

- The 14th ICCL biannual meeting (attended by 50 regulators and policy makers),
- 2 parallel workshops (TEMA workshop in cooperation to ReLASC and ICCL Workshop & World café ‘Contaminants of Emerging Concern’)

The ICCL 2019 events were hosted by MINAM, Ministry of Environment - Peru.

Session 2 – UPDATES – COUNTRIES, NETWORKS & INITIATIVES

Soil Policy in The Netherlands: developments – Margot DE CLEEN

- Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management sent a letter to the Government concerning a temporary framework on PFAS
- Letter to Government on excess soil in pits
- Nitrogen action programme banned in Court
- Circular agriculture: vision to use all agricultural soils sustainable by 2030
- Environmental and spatial planning act in preparation as well as an environmental vision
- National Soil Congress on soil related SDGs in May 2019
- 6th ENSA – JRC Meeting in Amsterdam, September 2019: open access course on tropical soil science ([link](#))
- International Soil Conference Wageningen 2019 (masterclass: [Soil-related Sustainable Development Goals: Transitions are needed!](#))

Diffuse Soil Pollution – Christiane WERMEILLE

Questionnaire

In 2018 a survey on the topic of diffuse soil pollution was sent out to COMMON FORUM members with the aim to learn and get an overview on how diffuse soil pollution is managed in practice in different countries/regions (12 questions on terminology, management and background values as well as questions on different case studies).

Cooperation Arcadis

The answers to the questionnaire were forwarded to Arcadis who undertakes a policy development study on diffuse soil pollution on behalf of Belgium/Flanders, which will be finished by the end of 2019.

Eurosoil 2020 (24 – 28 August 2020, Geneva, Switzerland)

A one day session will be dedicated to diffuse pollution “Challenges of assessing, managing diffuse soil pollution in urban areas” under SDG 3 (good health and well-being). Call for contributions opens 2 December 2019. At the next CF Spring meeting 2020 a time slot will be foreseen to prepare this session on diffuse soil contamination for the Eurosoil 2020. The Netherlands mentioned a work on diffuse lead, which might be an input to this session.

Furthermore UBA Germany will lead or be involved as co-convenor for the following topics: Urban expansion and the Soil Science – Policy – Law interface and Poly- and perfluorinated alky substances – challenges, remediation and future steps for science, industry and authorities.

Towards Strengthening European Soil Policy – Jörg FRAUENSTEIN

Following the discussion at the CF Luxembourg meeting May 2019, the work on the German soil position paper will be continued. Two topics were decided: contaminated land issues and climate impacts on soil. The preparation of papers for these two topics is envisaged in the near future and an International Workshop is foreseen, possibly at Eurosoil 2020. Further details will be distributed later via the COMMON FORUM Secretariat.

DG Env Soil Expert Group: at the moment an impact assessment is in preparation. The **9th Soil Expert Group Meeting** will take place on 26 November 2019 subsequent to the Conference on Soil and the SDGs (November 25, 2019).

Minamata convention

On July 1, 2019 an expert meeting on the **Contaminated Land Management (CLM) Guidance** document with regard to the "Minamata Convention" was held. A revised version was circulated for comments to be presented at the next COP-3 (November 25-29, 2019), where it likely will be adopted (or rejected). Although several amendments to the Guidance were sent beforehand only very few were included to the new version. Mainly risk based and sustainable remediation aspects were neglected. The continuation of the CF Minamata Mirror Group will depend on the outcome of the COP-3.

The Minamata Convention offers a financing mechanism within the **Specific International Programme to Support Capacity-Building and Technical Assistance (SIP)**, which is set up to assist developing countries Parties and Parties with economies in transition to develop projects to support their capacity to implement their obligations under the Minamata Convention.

- <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/News/fromtheConvention/SIPTenprojectsapprovedintheSecondRound/tabid/8134/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
- <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Implementation/SpecificInternationalProgramme/tabid/6334/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Relevant Articles of the Minamata convention:

- Art. 12: Contaminated Sites
- Art. 13: Financial resources & mechanism (GEF & SIP)
- Art. 14: Capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer

This financing mechanism would offer the chance to e.g. developing a programme for countries like Latin America, which should cover besides progress, regulations and policy aspects also technical aspects.

In December 2019, CF secretariat will send out a request to CF members if there is general interest for establishing a capacity building project proposal within the SIP and to look for partnering countries / networks in Latin America and / or African countries.

Examples of similar programmes were mentioned by Germany (with China and Romania) which could serve as an input for preparing such a project proposal. E.g. for Romania, a country specific bilingual guide (English/Rumanian) was presented together with the official project closure October 1, 2019. This guide also reflects the new legal framework in Rumania. In parallel a technical document will be prepared to disseminate in third countries and will be available early 2020.

EMERGING CONTAMINANTS

PFAS

Per and Poly Fluorinated Alkyl Substances (PFAS) and other Emerging Contaminants are representing a major challenge on a global level and are currently subject of intense debates in many countries, initiatives and programs, e.g.:

- The Netherlands: temporary operational framework PFAS; application of excavated soils;
- Belgium/Flanders: framework on PFAS;
- Germany: In a German project a nationwide guide was presented on November 13th regarding remediation and management options for PFAS hot spots and contamination with a larger spreading. After final approval besides the German version also an English translation is planned.
- Finland: several screening studies on PFAS
- EmConSoil: white paper on emerging soil contaminants

Initiation of a COMMON FORUM WG “Common Gap Analyses on PFAS”

In the light of the challenges and overall needs numerous countries are facing due to PFAS and other emerging contaminants it was agreed upon to establish a small Working Group within CF. The aim of the WG is to prepare a gap analyses on PFAS, appearing as an example for emerging contaminants.

The WG will be chaired by Co Molenaar and supported by Margot De Cleen, Jörg Frauenstein, Jussi Reinikainen, Christiane Wermeille and possibly Valérie Guerin. Other interested CF members are invited to join the WG. The aim is to prepare a “Common Gap Analyses on PFAS” until the next CF springtime meeting 2020.

In order to start the discussion on the “Common Gap Analyses on PFAS” it is necessary to get a common understanding on the general principles used in the various sectors (water, soil, agriculture) and countries (e.g. legally binding - PPP, precautionary, stand-still, risk based, conservative principle etc.). An email will be sent out on these principles as a starting point for discussion.

Starting to get inputs from CF members about

- the status quo of PFAS and
- knowledge questions

Synthesize a joint statement on research needs

- to be addressed to EC and
- shared among CF members and partners.

A suggestion was made to integrate the idea of a PFAS project under the next research and innovation framework programme Horizon Europe (within the mission area: soil health and food).

Soil policy for emerging contaminants: new sounds from Flanders – Johan CEENAEME

Existing legislation, frameworks and standards in Flanders are not sufficient yet to cover emerging contaminants which eventually end up in the environment, also in soils, very often present as diffuse soil contamination. Since emerging contaminants are ubiquitous and there is little knowledge about their effects, emerging contaminants create challenges and problems:

- Risks for human health and ecosystems
- Challenges for soil management practices & policy
- Challenges for societal change to sustainability

In Flanders currently the most urgent problem arises when dealing with excavated soil creating several unknowns and open questions (e.g. legal uncertainty, liability).

In order to tackle the problem and to introduce emerging contaminants in soil policy and remediation practice, exploratory measuring campaigns have been undertaken (e.g. random sampling) to get a global risk assessment and area-wide information for soil and groundwater quality in Flanders:

- Emerging contaminants: a phased approach (dioxins, TBA, 1,4-dioxane, PFAS)
- Approach to diffuse soil contamination

Emerging contaminants

PFAS: a report has been published with the results of the measuring campaign (PFAS in groundwater and soil). Guidelines are in development for fire brigades and for soil experts on excavated soil. Soil remediation criteria will be derived by the end of 2019.

Plans for the near future: generate PFAS background values, biomonitoring campaign with results until around end of 2020, project on effective remediation techniques, other emerging contaminants (e.g. brominated flame retardants).

Diffuse soil contamination

As a basis for a future policy, Flanders started a study with the following objectives:

- to inventory all available data on diffuse soil contamination in order
- to get an overview on the impact and extent of the problem and
- to make a proposal for a policy approach for diffuse soil contamination including a prioritisation.

The first phase of the project will last until December 2019.

An English report on diffuse soil contamination will probably be available by mid-2020.

EmConSoil

The future idea is the establishment of an international network [EmConSoil](#) to enable international and intersectoral collaboration on emerging contaminants in soils. A [white paper](#) has already been written which describes the challenges and focuses on the legacy of emerging soil contaminants and an international workshop has been organised in 2018 ([ENSOR](#)). The next ENSOR meeting will take place on Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 May 2020 in Mechelen (Belgium). The EmConSoil network membership is free of charge.

Session 3/1 – INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Joint Session COMMON FORUM and ReLASC

The aim of the joint session was an exchange of points of view on contaminated site management, the various challenges and needs among COMMON FORUM and ReLASC members as well as closer future cooperation and possible joint projects between European countries and Latin America.

The session was joined by following ReLASC members from:

- Argentina: Gladys Marchese (Government Province Neuquen), Leonardo Pflüger (Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina)
- Brasilia: André Oliveira (Companhia Ambiental do Estado de Sao Paulo)
- Chile: Cristóbal Girardi (Fundación Chile, ReLASC)
- Colombia: Ana María Ocampo Gómez (Responsable Care Colombia), Astrid Reyes (Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible Colombia), Alfonso Rodriguez (r3)

Environmental Technology Colombia), Maria José Villalobos (Novambientti Soluciones Ambientales)

- Ecuador: Stephanie Benitez, Mayra Rivera (Ministerio del Ambiente Ecuador)
- Peru: Pedro Sifuentes Amez (Ministry of Environment Peru)
- USA: Shun-Ping Chau (United States Environmental Protection Agency)

Several Latin American Countries are in the progress of developing a legislation on contaminated sites (e.g. Peru, Argentina). In a few countries or provinces laws, decrees or regulations for contaminated sites are already in force (Sao Paulo, Ecuador).

Common interests were identified in terms of capacity building, technical assistance and trainings within the different ministries as well as provinces. An overall challenge concerns mining sites and tailing problems (e.g. artisanal mining, old, abandoned sites). Inventory of remediation examples would be helpful to introduce different remediation options.

Conclusions / follow-up / wish-list

- Now: work basis and common understanding between COMMON FORUM and ReLASC has been established
- In 2 years: regular information exchange has been developed; 1 joint pilot project has been completed
- Todo:
 - ReLASC: list of priorities for cooperation projects (2 or 3 items, e.g. subjects of concern, case studies, regional projects like Amazon area covering several countries)
 - Chose and develop one bilateral project (Latin America and Europe), e.g. joint project within the Capacity-Building Programme in terms of the implementation of the Minamata Convention regarding contaminated sites
 - CF/ReLASC: proposals for how to share information efficiently (e.g. WhatsApp, monthly newsletter)

Session 3/2 – SECRETARIAT INFORMATION, WAYS FORWARD

Secretariat Information – Dietmar MÜLLER-GRABHERR

The call for applications for the 6th **COMMON FORUM secretariat period** (September 2020 – August 2023) is open. Applications shall be submitted latest by February 29, 2020. It is envisaged to prepare a decision to agree on at the CF springtime meeting (April/May 2020).

The new candidate for the next CF springtime meeting 2020 is Pordenone (Italy). For the autumn 2020 meeting (already under the 6th secretariat period) interested candidates are invited to apply as hosts (EU-presidency: Germany).

Austria (EEA) is hosting the **Common Forum Website** (www.commonforum.eu) since 2017, maintaining the **ICCL Website** since 2018 and having taken over the host in December 2019 (www.iccl.ch). Several challenges and drawbacks have to be faced:

- IT-standards of both Websites not up to date (rather 20th century like)
- Maintenance ICCL-homepage
- Data protection issues (due to European GDPR)
- ✓ Need for a relaunch!?
- ✓ Raising necessary resources (e.g. 6th secretariat period)?

Upcoming events:

- Soil and SDGs: Challenges and Need for Action – 25 November 2019, DG Environment, Brussels, Belgium
- 9th Soil Expert Group Meeting – 26 November 2019, DG Environment, Brussels, Belgium
- 1st meeting of the EIONET Working Group Soil Contamination – 2-3 December 2019, Bilthoven, The Netherlands
- European Commission Workshop on the Monitoring of PFAS in Water and other Media – 13-14 January 2020, DG Environment, Brussels, Belgium

Next CF meetings:

2020

- Spring 2020 – candidate: Pordenone (Italy)
- Autumn 2020 – interested candidates?

Tasks List

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Prepare a Common Gap Analyses on PFAS (emerging contaminants)	Dietmar, Working Group, Co	May 2020
Request to CF members for establishing capacity building project proposal within the Minamata Convention	Dietmar	December 2019