

Ostrava declaration and its fulfillment by the Czech Republic

On June 13 - 15, 2017, the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as „WHO“), entitled "Environment and Health", took place in Ostrava. The event was attended by representatives from 53 countries, representatives of 10 intergovernmental organizations, 10 organizations operating under the United Nations, European Union institutions, more than 150 observers representing academic and scientific organizations, as well as city representatives from the European Network of Healthy Cities and Regions, NGOs and members of Czech institutions and organizations, including the Regional Public Health Authority of the Moravian-Silesian Region, based in Ostrava.

At the end of the meeting, representatives of 53 countries signed the so-called Ostrava Declaration, which implies various commitments in the area of health and the environment. Fulfillment of the Declaration is optional for the signatory countries, but WHO is committed to conducting controls, and individual countries have pledged to report regularly on how they have managed to address them.

The Czech Republic also pledged to meet the goals of the Ostrava Declaration, or United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, with activities to meet these goals being coordinated by both the Ministry of Health ("MoH") and the Ministry of the Environment ("MoE"). Both ministries have formulated the so-called Portfolio of Actions, which deals with the implementation of measures in the following 5 areas:

1. Noise in the environment

- A. Quiet areas – the aim of the working group (MoH, MoE and the National Reference Laboratory for Noise in the Municipal Environment) is to set the so-called silent areas in the Czech Republic.
- B. Public access to justice in breach of national noise legislation – the working group for Quiet areas will discuss options to address shortcomings in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention. The MoH will focus on the evaluation of so-called time-limited permits

2. Asbestos

- A. Analysis of the current legal order - The MoH conducts an analysis of the current legal order governing the protection of health of workers and workers from exposure to asbestos-containing substances. The working group will address possible amendments to the Act on Public Health Protection and Government Regulation No. 361/2007 Coll. in this area.
- B. Educational campaign and checking compliance with safe asbestos management – MoH and MoE will increase population awareness and ensure that inspections are carried out by the relevant authorities.

3. Increase public awareness of air pollution, its causes and impacts on human health

- A. Negative impacts of low-quality fuel combustion - The aim of the MoE and MoH is to promote the dissemination of information to the general public

about the negative impacts of low-quality fuel combustion on air quality and human health.

- B. Employee health protection - The aim is to raise awareness of occupational health and safety at workplaces where occupational diseases or exposure to occupational risk factors arise through close co-operation between operators and public health authorities, following the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. There will also be a nationwide campaign on occupational diseases aimed at both employees and employers or experts.

4. Involvement in projects related to human monitoring

- A. Coordination in environmental monitoring and biomonitoring - The objective is to improve the long-term coordination of project activities of environmental monitoring and biomonitoring at the national level.
- B. Involvement in the HBM4EU project – the involvement of the Czech Republic in biomonitoring campaigns of the European project HBM4EU, which deals with monitoring of negative impacts of chemicals on human health. Emphasis will be placed on obtaining new data on the exposure of the Czech population to emergent substances and on identifying the exposure of children and young people to priority contaminants.
- C. Coordination of participation in ESFRI on the EIRENE project.
- D. Regular meetings to implement international conventions on chemicals.
- E. Raise awareness of employee health protection following the Minamata Convention.

5. Light pollution

- A. Educational campaign – The aim of the health promotion is to organize awareness-raising events and campaigns to inform the public about the harmfulness of the blue light component, especially to circadian rhythms.
- B. Light Pollution Impact Research Project - A research project from the Beta Technological Agency of the Czech Republic to address the effects of light pollution on species, communities and ecosystems
- C. Legislation - Check the possibility to include light color temperature in the relevant law.

