



Disposal of unused pesticides in Bulgaria

## WASTE DISPOSAL: GREATER SAFETY FOR HUMANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Warehouse in need of redevelopment in Krumovo, Municipality of Akskakovo in North-East Bulgaria.

**Switzerland supports the environmentally friendly disposal of around 4,500 tonnes of unused toxic pesticides stored in warehouses all over Bulgaria. The Swiss contribution also provides means to redevelop warehouses in very poor condition and to identify severe ground contamination. This takes the edge of one of Bulgaria's most serious environmental issues.**

Until several years ago, more than 14,000 tonnes of unused, now banned, toxic pesticides and other agricultural control chemicals from the days of Communist rule were stored in over 260 Bulgarian municipalities. The majority of these substances have already been disposed of properly under an environmental protection project launched by the Bulgarian government.

However, more than 200 warehouses across the country still store several thousand tonnes of pesticides. Many of these warehouses are in a poor condition and pose a hazard to both the surrounding environment and general public. The extent of the contamination and the resource-intensive processing of these hazardous pesticides are presenting the affected, mainly rural and financially weak, municipalities with an impossible financial and logistical task. Switzerland has therefore contributed

CHF 19.9 million to assist these municipalities in the environmentally friendly disposal of these substances and the redevelopment of the warehouses. Severe ground contamination is also identified. The Bulgarian government will redevelop the affected locations once the project has been completed. These measures increase the safety and quality of life of the around 2.3 million citizens of the affected municipalities and make it possible to reuse the previously toxic locations.

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### POOR STORAGE CONDITIONS PROVE A HAZARD TO BOTH HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The poor condition of many warehouses has led to the various substances stored in these locations mixing over the years, thus creating unknown and hazardous compounds. All residual substances therefore have to be incinerated by foreign specialist companies – a very costly process. International treaties clearly regulate the handling, transport and disposal of such substances<sup>1</sup>.

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### ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DISPOSAL OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Switzerland implements the following measures to help ease this huge environmental burden:

- Around 4,500 tonnes of pesticides are collected, repackaged, exported and incinerated using special processes.
- Warehouses are redeveloped for different uses.
- Severe ground contamination is identified. The Bulgarian government initiates the redevelopment

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<sup>1</sup> The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade apply.

of the affected locations once the project has been completed.

- An information campaign makes citizens aware of the situation.

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## SWITZERLAND ALSO PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR THE HANDLING OF HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE

The handling of hazardous waste is a focal point of the Swiss-Bulgarian cooperation. In addition to providing assistance with the environmentally friendly disposal of unused pesticides, Switzerland also supports the development of a national concept for collecting and storing hazardous household waste. Pilot projects will be rolled out to test this concept in Bulgarian municipalities. The environmentally friendly disposal of hazardous waste reduces ground and water contamination as well as health hazards.

*Bulgaria maintains an excellent relationship with the Swiss Confederation, especially in the field of environmental protection. Swiss support has been essential for the achievement of the high European ecological standards after our country's accession to the EU.*

*Exemplary in this regard is the case of hazardous waste management in Bulgaria – a domestic problem that, at the same time, requires a European solution.*

*Teams comprising Swiss and Bulgarian experts are working on two projects concerning the disposal of obsolete pesticides and the environmentally sound collection and storage of hazardous household waste.*

*With the support provided by Switzerland, we expect to achieve several thousand tonnes of obsolete pesticides repacked and exported for disposal, as well as to close or renovate storehouses and other domestic infrastructure for pesticide storage and disposal.*

*Owing to Switzerland's expertise and its financial contribution, both projects will have a lasting effect on Bulgaria's waste management policy and will lead to a secure, sustainable and state-of-the-art solution for the safe treatment and disposal of hazardous waste.*



**Svetlana Jekova**  
Minister of Environment and  
Water

## SHORT PROJECT OVERVIEW

### OBJECTIVE

Protecting the environment

### TOPIC

Waste disposal

### COUNTRY

Bulgaria

### STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Around 4,500 tonnes of unused toxic, now banned, pesticides are stored in Bulgaria, particularly in its rural regions. The municipalities responsible for local waste management do not have the financial and logistical means to facilitate the cost-intensive storage and disposal of this hazardous waste.

### PURPOSE

Improving the protection of both health and the environment through the proper disposal and storage of toxic substances.

### ACTIVITIES

- Collecting and repackaging the unused pesticides
- Transporting, exporting and disposing of the unused pesticides
- Redeveloping outdated warehouses
- Identifying severe ground contamination

### TARGET GROUP

The 100 affected municipalities and their 2.3 million citizens as well as the Bulgarian government

### COSTS

Total project budget:  
CHF 23.4 million

Swiss contribution:  
CHF 19.9 million

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

State Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA)

100 Bulgarian municipalities

### DURATION

2015–2019

SWISS ENLARGEMENT CONTRIBUTION

December 2014

[www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch](http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch)