



Workshop on Vlora Hot Spot of Pollution - Bioremediation of Mercury from the Contaminated Areas



Four miles north of Vlora in Albania is the site of a former chemical complex that produced chlorine, alkali, and polyvinyl chloride. The plant was closed in 1992, and its buildings have been completely destroyed since that time. Families now live on and around the industrial site. The factory encompasses approximately one km² and is located directly on the Adriatic Sea. The site was defined as a “hot spot of pollution” by a recent UNEP investigation.

A major environmental problem is posed by the destroyed former chlorine-alkali electrolysis plant. UNEP observed drops of metallic mercury in the hall of the electrolysis plant and in all of its drainage canals. A UNEP soil sample found mercury levels >10,000 mg/kg in the area of the former plant. This level is 1,000 times greater than typical EU thresholds.

It is the aim of the workshop on Vlora Hot Spot of Pollution to bring together all parties who have been working on the site or are involved in decision making to

- **assess the extend of the pollution in view of recent measuring campaigns**
- **evaluate possible clean-up options, especially soil washing and microbiological treatment.**

A unique biotechnological process for removal of mercury from wastewater based on the enzymatic transformation reactions of live mercury resistant bacteria has been developed by the German Research Institute for Biotechnology mbH (GBF), Braunschweig, Germany. A project **Biomercury**, aiming at implementing this new technology of mercury remediation and sharing knowledge and experience with potential users is being carried out within the 6th European Framework Program with an international consortium of participants:

German Research Center for Biotechnology (GBF) - Germany, the project coordinator
Technical University of Braunschweig - Germany
University of Southampton - England
Geotest – Czech Republic
Hebrew University of Jerusalem - Israel
Technical University of Lodz - Poland
Jozef Stefan Institute - Slovenia
University of Tirana - Albania
Almaty Institute of Power Engineering and Telecommunications - Kazakhstan
University of Cartagena - Columbia
Instituto de Ciências do Mar - Brazil
Rutgers University - USA
University of Florida - USA
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency - USA.

www.biomercury.de

One of the nearest workshops of this project is being organized in Albania by the University of Tirana, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Chemistry.

On behalf of the BIOMERCURY project coordinator Dr. Irene Wagner-Döbler we wish to encourage you to take part in the Workshop on Vlora Hot Spot of Pollution - Bioremediation of Mercury from the Contaminated Areas.

WHEN:

on 25 /26. April 2005.

VENUE:

The Ministry of the Environment, Rr. Durrësit, No. 27, Tirana, Albania

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The workshop is addressed most of all to Environmental Institutions, NGOs, Universities, interested companies working in cleaning technology of contaminated areas, who can become future holders of this biotechnology. Its aim is to allow potential users to get to know this new technology and give them a possibility to discuss about its practical implementation.

The program of the meeting and further information can be found on our website www.biomercury.de

If you wish to take part in our meeting please contact:

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