

SECOTOX '99 CONFERENCE

Increased industrial activities, extensive agriculture and other human activities result in increasing environmental pollution posing an important problem all over the world. Some chemicals are especially hazardous due to their stability and persistency. Typical examples are the chlorinated organic compounds, which have extensively been used for several decades in the industry, agriculture and even for domestic household purposes. Although the problem of persistent chlorinated organic compounds is ubiquitous, Central and Eastern Europe is especially affected by these chemicals.

Recent international activities focused on the potential deleterious effects of polychlorinated biphenyls, polychlorinated dibenzo-dioxins and dibenzofuranes as the most important classes of polychlorinated organic compounds.

The Central European section of the Society of Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety (SECOTOX), along with National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and other institutes from USA with collaboration with the National Institute of Environmental Health, Budapest, Hungary, further with the Hungarian Union of Toxicologists organized an international conference on the hazard and risk of organohalogenic compounds on the environment and human health.

The conference was unique from many respects. International collaboration, interdisciplinary approach helped to attract many scientists from different European and overseas countries. The problem of organohalogenic pollution in the countries of the region attracted more than 140 scientists from the region, from different European countries and from the United States. The interdisciplinary approach to the problem of organohalogenic compounds ensured extensive discussion on the sources, occurrence, and the extent of pollution in terms of the environment and the human health effects. Chemistry, analytical and diagnostic aspects have been discussed. Metabolism, molecular mechanisms of actions, various toxicological and ecotoxicological aspects of the persistent organochlorines were discussed.

The joint organization with the Union of Hungarian Toxicologists helped to facilitate communication between scientists from Hungary and different parts of the world.

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