

***COMMON FORUM on Contaminated land in the  
European Union 2&3 November 2006 Bilbao***

*Meeting agenda and information*



October 11, 2006

Dr. Joop J. Vegter

# COMMON FORUM ON CONTAMINATED LAND

Bilbao– 2/3 november 2006

Meeting location: Barcelo Hotel Nervion, Paseo Campo Volantin 11, 48007 Bilbao

**\*Wednesday evening November 1 get-together 7pm at the Nervion Hotel\***

## *Agenda*

### **Thursday 2 November 2006**

<b>Session 1</b> <i>(10:00-11:30)</i>	<b>WELCOME AND GENERAL MATTERS</b>	
10:00	Welcome address on behalf of the Basque government Short information about the meeting	Ana Alzola & Joop Vegter
10:30	News and views from the COMMON FORUM, tour the table: “First impressions on EU soil policy package”	All members
11:30	<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>	
<b>Session 2</b> <i>(12:00 –13:00)</i>	<b>STATE AID AND REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITES part 1</b>	
12:00	Introduction to the main theme of the day: contaminated land remediation and state aid.  Small presentations by a few COMMON FORUM members and from CABERNET	Joop Vegter
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
<b>Session 2</b> <i>(13:00 –17:00)</i>	<b>STATE AID AND REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITES part 2</b>	
14:00	EU state aid rules and contaminated land remediation programmes and projects. A presentation by EU DG competition,	Saskia Dirkzwager- de Rijk (EUDG competition)
14:30	Question and answers	
14:45	<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>	
15:00	Discussions about state aid and funding of remediation in small groups	
<b>Session 3</b> <i>(17:00 –20,00)</i>	<b>“FIELD TRIP” TO THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM</b>	
17:00	Introduction to the contaminated land history and remediation of the area around the museum	
17:30	Travel to the Guggenheim museum and visit of the museum till 20:00	
21:00	<b>Joint Dinner offered by our Basque hosts</b>	

**Friday 9 June 2006**

<b>Session 2</b> <i>(9:00 – 10:00)</i>	<b>STATE AID AND REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITES part 3</b>	
09:00	Reports of the group discussions and general conclusions	
<b>Session 4</b> <i>(10:00-13:00)</i>	<b>EU SOIL PROTECTION POLICY AND CONTAMINATED LAND</b>	
10:00	Presentation of the EC proposals on soil protection policy	Luca Marmo (DG-ENV)
<i>10:45</i>	<i>Coffee/Tea Break</i>	
11:00	Discussion about the EC proposals focussed on contaminated land	
12:00	General conclusions	Joop Vegter
<b>Session 5</b> <i>(12:15 – 13:00)</i>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	
12:15	Research news	Joop Vegter
12:30	Next meeting and suggestions from the agenda committee	
12:45	Other urgent matters, closure of the meeting	Joop Vegter
<i>13:00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	

## **Additional information about the meeting agenda**

### ***SESSION 1J: WELCOME & GENERAL MATTERS***

After the opening and welcome speeches we will have a tour the table. Every participant will have a 2-3 minute time slot to introduce him/herself and to make a short statement about expectations, hopes and fears concerning the recently published soil policy proposals from the EC. I know that most of us will welcome something about soils and their protection at the European level. But it would be interesting to hear opinions whether the current proposals will support contaminated land management in the memberstates. Will it promote the development of contaminated land policies in those states that do not have a fully developed policy? Will it help to make life easier for those countries who have already a long tradition in addressing soil contamination and who may struggle with other area's of EU policy, for instance state aid rules, groundwater protection and EU waste legislation in the design of sustainable solutions for contaminated land problems? Of course we all know there is more to soil protection and contaminated land management than can be described in a few articles in a soil framework directive, but if we consider this as a starting point, how does the future look? Our first impression may also be a good starting point for the discussion we will have on the second day of the meeting after the presentation of Luca Marmo from DG ENV.

### ***SESSION 2J: STATE AID AND REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITES***

This subject was proposed at our last meeting in Budapest. Some countries that are promoting public-private partnership to fund contaminated land remediation and brownfield redevelopment may have encountered some limitations due to European state aid rules. We are happy that Saskia Dirkzwager-de Rijk from EU-DG competition is present at our meeting to explain current thinking about state aid at the EU level. She may also indicate possible future developments. A few country representatives will tell us about their national experiences with contaminated land remediation funding. We may also hear about the results of a discussion concerning state aid in the CABERNET network on urban brownfield redevelopment. These presentations should provide a good starting point for further in depth discussions in smaller groups. Avoiding false competition between companies in EU memberstates resulting from national subsidies and respecting the polluter pay principle is one thing, but "revitalising" polluted soils and restoring their economic and social functions may require some economic incentives to get things started. The borderline between "economic incentives" and "competition distorting state aid" may be hard to draw. The COMMON FORUM discussion may help to find the right approach. Improvement of the environmental and economic health in Europe should not be contradictory in the long run.

### ***SESSION 3J: FIELD TRIP***

The Guggenheim museum in Bilbao is part of a success story in urban brownfield redevelopment. Although the museum by itself is interesting enough, the story behind the brownfield redevelopment in Bilbao will be of interest for our meeting as well. The event will be organised by our host, the Basque country. After the trip we will have a joint dinner.

## **SESSION 4]: EU SOIL PROTECTION POLICY AND CONTAMINATED LAND**

On September 22 the commission finally published the proposals for an EU soil policy, including a proposal for a soil framework directive. This means that our “internal discussions” about different leaked draft versions has fortunately come to an end. The COMMON FORUM secretariat did prepare a quite long and sometimes quite criticizing document about the draft proposals, exploring conceivable good and bad scenario’s for the outcome of the political discussions in the council of Ministers and the European parliament and subsequent technical implementation discussions. This document has been sent to COMMON FORUM members and most of the comments are still worth considering, given the fact that the directive did not change dramatically during the last stages of the internal interservice consultation in the EC. However many points raised in this document are at present less relevant for the current stage of the discussion. We should therefore concentrate on the most important aspects of the proposal.

Luca Marmo (DG ENV) will refresh our memories about the intentions of the commission with the directive. This will hopefully lead to answers of the many questions COMMON FORUM members raised and lead to a better mutual understanding of the different positions. We may also identify areas where the directive could be improved. Some changes may be useful avoid misunderstandings, or may lead to less unintended restrictions for countries with long standing contaminated land policies, without lessening the pressure on those EU countries that do not have a fully developed contaminated land policy.

## **SESSION 5]: NEXT STEPS**

This session will be about future activities of COMMON FORUM. There will be an update on EU research projects in FP 6 that are relevant for contaminated land management, among others RISK BASE and RISK BRIDGE. There will also be an update on a project financed by Germany as a contribution to COMMON FORUM. As discussed in our meeting in Budapest the project has a working title: “Urban soil ecosystem services”. This project aims at bringing together the rather diffusely organised expertise on urban soils and their ecological functions in order to form a consortium and to write a proposal for a “Coordination Action” for FP7. The need for such an action was already identified in the EU funded JOINT project. Several institutions already expressed their interest to participate in the Coordination action, so we can look forward to a positive result.

Another future activity is the next COMMON FORUM meeting. This will most likely take place in Germany (during the German presidency) annex to a large international brownfield conference (25-27 April 2007) organised by CABERNET and REVIT in Stuttgart.

We also need topics for the agenda of the next meeting. Although we can be sure that the EU soil strategy will be on the agenda again, we need other topics to discuss. We would welcome proposals from the COMMON FORUM agenda committee (representatives from countries that give financial support to the secretariat)