

Protocol to be adopted

Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR)

Switzerland will be signing the following protocol at the 'Environment for Europe' Conference in Kiev from 21 to 23 May 2003:

Pollutant reduction and public information on pollutants

- **More information and less environmental pollution.** The contracting parties undertake to build up a publicly available, user-friendly national pollutant release and transfer register. The data is to be published on the internet, which should make it easier for the general public to take part in the debate on environmental issues and help to prevent and reduce environmental pollution.
- **Emissions data.** The national pollutant release and transfer register should contain data on 86 environmental pollutants and their release into the air, water and soil. The register is based on an annual, obligatory duty to report: on the one hand, firms must report if they are emitting more than the permissible amount of specific pollutants and on the other, data on the movement of pollutants and waste beyond the firm's boundaries (transfers) must be reported. Where justified, the information can be classed as confidential, for example on account of a company or business secret.
- **New creation.** Agenda 21 of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 called on States to reduce their emissions into the environment and to monitor the achievement of this goal. The creation of a pollutant release and transfer register (PRTR) was proposed. In 1996 the OECD published a recommendation on the implementation of PRTRs. In 1998 the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) established a right of access of the public to environmental information under the Aarhus Convention Agreement, which provides for the creation of national pollutant release and transfer registers.

Information

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