

Ulf Bjällås

Good morning everyone, good morning fellow judges. And thank you Peter and Luc for inviting me. It has been a great pleasure to take part in the conference.

I became a member of the Board in 2004 when the first General Assembly Meeting was held in Luxemburg. In 2010 I retired from my court – The Environmental Court of Appeal in Stockholm – and at the same time I stepped down from the Board of our Forum. I am no longer active as a judge. But I am still interested in environmental issues and from time to time I function as an advisor to a law firm in Stockholm.

The law firm is specialized in land- and environmental law. This is a new experience for me. I have been working as a judge for many years, and also as a civil servant a long time ago, but never as lawyer in a law firm. Quite interesting I would like to say.

I have also been working with two comprehensive environmental assignments I have received from the Swedish Environment Protection Agency, an assignment the Agency in turn was given by the Swedish Ministry of the Environment. They are both joint Swedish-Ukrainian and Swedish-Russian projects.

The association agreement between EU and Ukraine has been at the top of the European agenda for several years, as you are aware of. A prerequisite for EU to sign an association agreement with Ukraine has been that Ukraine adapts its environmental legislation to the EU legislation. My mission was to propose draft legislation in order to transpose the IPPC directive into the Ukrainian legislation. I and a colleague of mine have been working with this for two years and after a lot of discussions with various people in Ukraine, during workshops and seminars and during study tours, we proposed draft legislation last year, in 2013. But what`s now happening to the draft, I do not know. I have no contact with the Ministry of National recourses and Environment in Kiev. A conflict, a war, intervned as you know!

The Swedish Russian project is about BAT, the concept of BAT. This summer the Russian Duma passed new rules based on BAT. The next step in the project is to support the implementation of the legislation, and that will take time. The project is expected to move on in spite of the situation between Russia and Ukraine unless the new Swedish government that recently took office takes a new position.

The impact on the environment from some of the industrial plants in Russia and Ukraine is sometimes considerable (*very strong, alarming*)

I am mentioning these two projects, - the reason why I am doing it is: When we have been discussing our proposals with different people in Russia and in Ukraine I have benefited greatly from the knowledge and experience I have gained from our Forum. For example, I could make reference to how various EU countries have put in place different EU-directives in their legislation. The model with questionnaires we are using in the Forum is very good. The answers to the questionnaires contain a lot of interesting information.

Of course, it is important to bring EU judges together and to discuss different environmental topics in the manner our Forum has been doing for ten years. But our Forum and we, the judges, have an important role to play, also outside European Union. As I see it, it is important that we share our knowledge, our experience, with judges in other countries. When I have been in Russia and Ukraine and other countries I have - as I already have mentioned - been able to refer to the knowledge and experience available within the Forum and on our excellent website.

So fellow judges, members of the Forum, I wish you every success in your important work. Environmental issues are vital worldwide.

Thank you for your attention.