AUDIT FINDINGS OF HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

Name of Supreme Audit Institution

The Supreme Chamber of Control

Title of summary report on audit findings

Hazardous waste management

Audit Description

The audit aim was to evaluate the following aspects of implementation of the national policy of protection of the environment against hazardous wastes:

- projects undertaken in order to prevent or minimize generation of hazardous wastes and to increase the degree to which such wastes are utilized for economic purposes;
- reduction of the adverse impact of hazardous wastes on the environment;
- legality of economic activities connected with generation, utilisation, disposal and storage of hazardous wastes and legality of the functioning of the fees system for storage of hazardous wastes and fines imposed for hazardous waste management which violates the relevant regulations or administrative decisions.

The audit was undertaken on the SCC’s own initiative; it was conducted in the period from the first to the third quarter of 2000 and covered the period from January 1st, 1998 to December 31st, 1999.

Reasons for undertaking the audit — In 1997, about 125 million Mg of industrial wastes were generated in Poland, including 4 million Mg of hazardous wastes posing threat to human life and health and to environment.

On January 1st 1998, the Act on Wastes of June 27th, 1997 entered into force. Together with a set of six daughter regulations, the Act builds on and supplements earlier environmental legislation concerning protection against hazardous wastes. The Act i.a. sets the obligations of industries which generate and dispose of hazardous wastes and the tasks of government and self-government administration bodies, aimed at preventing or minimizing generation of wastes and at utilisation or
disposal of wastes in a manner ensuring that human life and health as well as the environment are protected.

Scope of audit:

progress in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy in the field of priority tasks aimed at reducing of the impact of hazardous wastes on the environment;

performance by the Voids and Heads of District in the field of granting economic entities permits for generation and disposal of hazardous wastes; performance by Marshals of Voivodships in the field of collection and redistribution of fees for storage of hazardous wastes and fines for violating regulations or administrative decisions concerning storage of hazardous wastes;

supervision exercised by environmental inspection authorities and customs authorities over international trade in hazardous wastes;

supervision exercised by voivodship environmental protection inspectorates over compliance with the administrative decisions and environmental regulations on protection against hazardous wastes on the part of entities which generate and receive hazardous wastes.

Audited units

The audit was performed in 137 organisational units, out of which the SCC audited 96 units and Voivodship. Environmental Protection Inspectorates at the request of the SCC audited 41 units.

Audit Participants:

The Department of Environmental Protection, co-ordinating the audit, and all the regional offices of the SCC.

Summary of the audit findings and evaluation of the audited activities

The audit findings indicates insufficient compliance with regulations concerning protection of the environment against hazardous wastes of the administrative part of government and self-government administration bodies and the part of businesses involved in activities connected with generation and/or disposal of hazardous wastes.
Entities which generated or received hazardous wastes often conducted their activities without the necessary permits for generation and/or disposal of such wastes. The Voivods and Heads of District did not have sufficient information on economic entities obliged to hold such permits; and Heads of Voivodship Self-Governments lacked sufficient information on entities obliged to pay fees for storage of wastes.

The audit also indicated the need for strict enforcement of regulations concerning hazardous waste management by economic entities as well as government and self-government administration bodies. It is necessary to strengthen the supervision of the Environmental Inspection over economic entities with regard to hazardous waste management and the supervision of the Customs Authorities and the Environmental Inspection over international movement of hazardous wastes.

Conclusions

Recommended measures to eliminate the above irregularities included i.a. the following:

- maintaining complete registers of plants in individual Voivodships, involved in activities connected with generation or disposal of hazardous wastes;

- ensuring that effective measures are taken in order to accelerate the elimination of hazardous waste tanks and to ensure that storage of hazardous wastes is environmentally safe;

- acceleration of work on the improvement of the System of Information on Industrial Waste Management in order to gain comprehensive knowledge about the state of waste management, including hazardous waste management, in the country;

- monitoring of compliance with conditions set in permits for international trade in hazardous wastes; exaction of due fees and fines for storage of hazardous wastes and prompt transfer of these revenues to the accounts of District Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management;

- development of close co-operation with the customs authorities with regard to identification of hazardous waste transports undergoing customs clearance.

Addressees of the summary report on audit findings

The Supreme Chamber of Control has forwarded the summary report on audit findings to the President of the Republic of Poland, the Parliament, the relevant
ministers and heads of central units as well as to Voivods and Heads of Voivodship. The public has been informed about the findings through mass media.