

# Press Release No. 31/2009

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Joint press release with the German Federal Ministry for Environment

## **Pollutants in my neighbourhood**

### **A new register provides quick answers for citizens**

How much carbon dioxide is the local factory emitting into the air? Which heavy metals are in the effluent going into rivers? Which countries does the industrial operation export its waste to? Anyone looking for information on pollutant emissions out of sheer curiosity or for professional purposes can now find out through Germany's new Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR). Online access to [www.prtr.bund.de](http://www.prtr.bund.de) is free of charge to all users.

Parliamentary State Secretary Michael Müller in the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) will inaugurate the new environment information portal in Berlin today. He comments, "The new PRTR portal will lend considerably more transparency of environmental information to the public. It has never been easier than now to get a look behind the scenes of an industrial operation." Dr. Thomas Holzmann, Vice President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) said, "With just a few mouse clicks private citizens can get free and unlimited information about pollutant emissions and waste from large industrial facilities. Starting late September, the launch of an EU Register will also make international comparisons of mitigation efforts possible". The federal government representative for IT and undersecretary of the Federal Ministry of Interior, Dr. Hans-Bernhard Beus, praised the electronic version of PRTR as one of the most successful e-government 2.0 projects in the area of process chains, saying, "The early inclusion of the private sector and the consistent implementation of standards in data security are but two aspects that are integrated into the electronic PRTR. The PRTR has been one of the lighthouse projects in the federal government's new IT strategy since 2008 and is also funded by the Ministry of Interior and federal government."

There are now more than 4,000 industrial operators submitting annual reports to the new Pollutant Release and Transfer Register with data on their pollutant emissions to air, water and soil as well as their handling of waste and effluent. Large industrial operators and other organisations within the energy sector, the chemicals industry, mass animal husbandry and large waste water treatment facilities are obliged to report. Businesses which are obligated to report submit annual data to the appropriate authorities electronically with the use of new data entry software known as BUBE-Online. The *Laender* review these data and forward them to UBA, who in turn process the data to update the information on the new [www.prtr.bund.de](http://www.prtr.bund.de) Internet platform.

Installation and operation of the pollutant register result from an international UN-ECE agreement which was signed by Germany and 35 other states as well as the EU Regulation of 18 January 2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register. Germany transposed this regulation into national law on 6 June 2007 by enacting legislation to implement the protocol of 21 May 2003 establishing a pollutant release and transfer register, and legislation to implement the European PRTR Regulation Nr. 166/2006 (*SchadRegProtAG = German "PRTR Law"*).

For more information see [www.prtr.bund.de](http://www.prtr.bund.de) (to be activated 3 June 2009 at 15:30).

Dessau-Roßlau, 3 June 2009