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PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY TO THE OSCE

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Statement on the red sludge spill in Hungary

As delivered by Ambassador Dr. György Molnár
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 12 October 2010

Mr. Chairperson,

In addition to the relevant part of your report on the activities of the Chairmanship I would like to take this opportunity to provide further information to the Permanent Council on the sludge spill in Hungary.

On the 4th of October red sludge escaped from a reservoir of a privately owned alumina production company located 160 km from Budapest. The spill has been one of the most tragic industrial and environmental catastrophes Hungary has ever faced.

The sludge spill caused severe damage in two villages, killing eight people and injuring 130. The Hungarian government took immediate measures to ensure the safety of the local population and started clean-up and decontamination operations. Authorities have been doing their utmost to stabilize the dam of the reservoir and so far no further leaking has been detected. To prevent any further spill of sludge an additional emergency protection dyke is being built. The toxic material is being removed and transported back to the site and deposited in a safe manner. Water and air quality is continuously monitored at several points in and around the affected area.

Authorities have spared no efforts to localize damages, minimize the effect of the sludge spill on downstream rivers, especially the Danube and to prevent potential trans-boundary effects. Thanks to these efforts pH levels have been considerably reduced in contaminated rivers. Measurements in the Danube show pre-contamination – i.e. normal – conditions.

In addition to national efforts Hungary has activated the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, requesting experts with field experience in handling toxic sludge, decontamination and mitigation of environmental damage.

Further information on the spill is available at the following official website [www. redsludge.bm.hu](http://www.redsludge.bm.hu)

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.