

EMCEF/ECEG Project 2007-2008

**Improvement of
Health and Safety at
the workplace as
target for Social
Dialogue**



Aims of the project

- Reduction of occupational diseases is one of the targets of EU Health and Safety policy
- REACH was meant to contribute to reduction of risk and improvement of health at the workplace
- SD in chemical industry has felt that it could contribute to achieve aims because of competence and commitment of social partners in chemical industry
- Number of occupational diseases caused by chemical substances is rather low in chemical industry, whereas reduction could be achieved in CEE countries and downstream industries

In detail

- Chemical industry in EU 15 has fortunately rather low record of occupational diseases related to chemicals
- Compensation instead of prevention does still play a role in some countries
- Downstream users have higher number of occupational diseases caused by chemicals
- Recommendations and sharing of good practice could help to improve standards

Our understanding

- Social partners should look together for ways of improvement
- Need for a specific approach taking regional and sector differences into consideration
- This could be a way to deliver benefits directly
- This could involve other sectors as well in the future

Activities within the project

- 1. Workshop on Health and safety in the chemical industry in EU 15 to evaluate standards in Brussels
- 2. Workshop on specific situation in CEE-countries in Bratislava
- 3. Workshop with down-stream-users of the agricultural sector in Barcelona
- Final conference to discuss findings of the 3 workshops to be discussed in a meeting of project partners

1. Workshop (1)

- Information on properties of substances will be available for producers **and** users from REACH
- Information will not lead to improvement automatically
- It is expected that improvements will take place where standards are already high, but not have many effects where they are low
- Additional initiatives are needed – target 0 accidents and occupational diseases is still valid

1. Workshop (2)

- Special aspects of SMEs, suppliers, downstream users, temporary work agencies and contractors need to be taken into consideration
- Information system on occupational risks including emergency treatment could be a way and need to be available for everybody
- Improvement of practice is aim of this activity of SD

2. Workshop (1)

- Structural changes still play an important role in CEE – from bulk-chemicals to specialities
- H&S activities are in place in all countries – organised in a different way
- Social partners in chemical industry are working on continuous improvement of H&S

2. Workshop (2)

- Compensation dates back from “old days”
- Abolishment is not a way, as loss of income is not acceptable – remuneration system needs to be modernised by social partners in CB
- Exchange with SP in other countries may help to find ways and to identify suitable examples of good practise

3. Workshop (1)

- Problem with H&S in agriculture have been understood and confirmed as well as special situation in the sector: high number of SMEs, seasonal work, high number of migrant workers
- Several initiatives exist already – but are not linked with each other sufficiently
- Social partners in the sector need to act together – networking needs to include producers of agrochemicals as well
- Cultural distance between chemical industry and agricultural sector needs to be understood

3. Workshop (2)

- Common initiatives need to be further evaluated
- Areas of activities:
 - Information on risks/certification of users from producers
 - Training and education for workers
 - Personal protection equipment
 - Medical treatment /check-ups
- Common working group Chemical industry/Agriculture as first step to be discussed

Final Conference

- Evaluation of results from the 3 workshops was main focus
- Conclusions for further activities were discussed for all 3 aspects
- Draft documentation of results from the projects were discussed
- Follow-up project for down-stream users sector and other initiatives of SD chemical industry were discussed as well

External expertise

- Involvement of EU Commission intended
- Social partners from agriculture have agreed to take part
- External experts will be involved to write reports and summarise results

Documentation

- Examples of good practice and specific recommendations for further activities as result of the project on H&S will be main content
- CD-ROM and website will be produced with results
 - 64 pages possible
- Translation of publication in 7 languages is possible:
CZ, DE, EN, ES, FR, HU, IT, PL

Follow-up of the project

- Recommendation for follow-up project need to be discussed further
- Talks with social partners in other sectors are on the way
- Possible sectors: hairdressers, building and construction – other sectors are possible as well