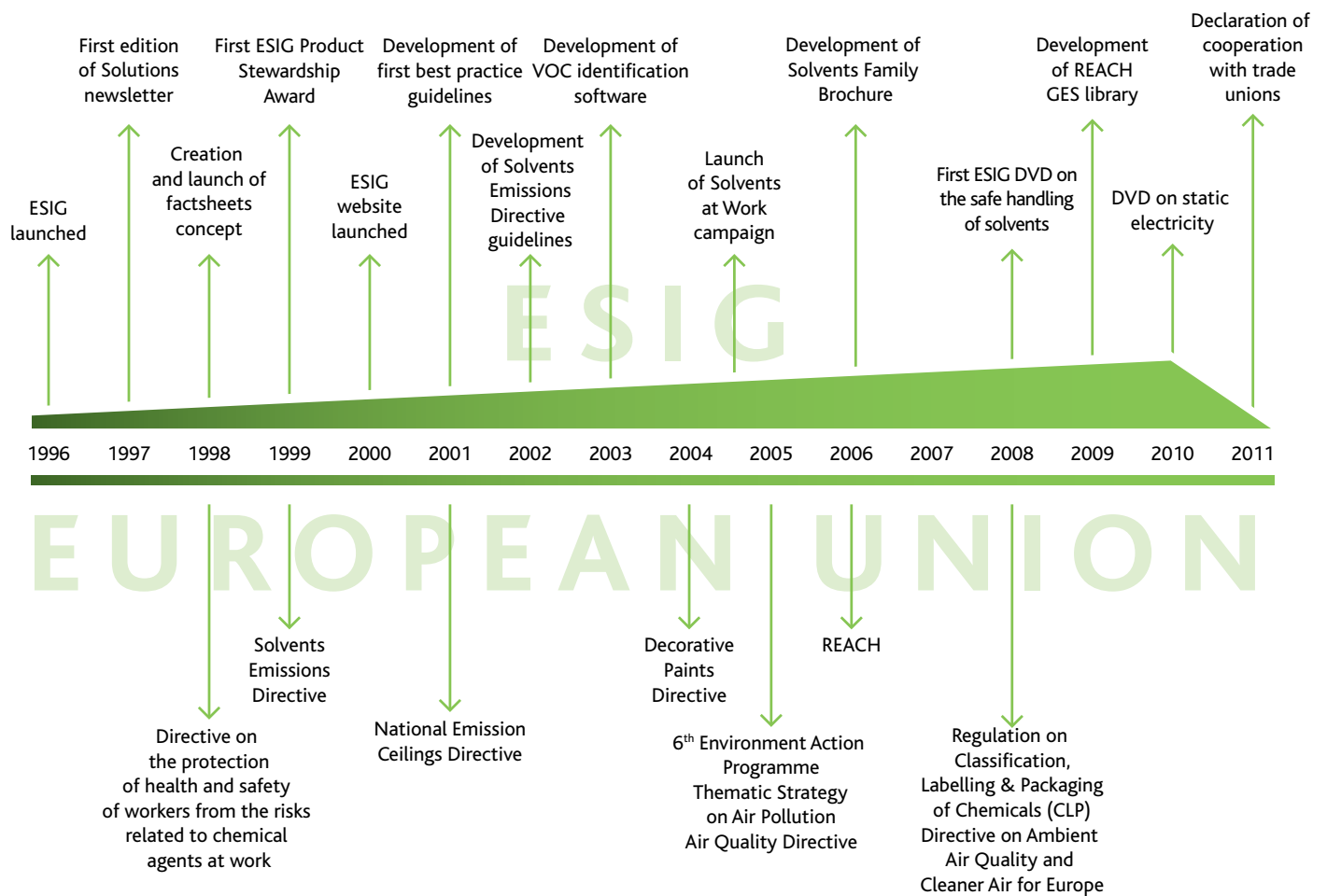




ESIG *15 Years* Anniversary Edition



15 YEARS OF WORKING IN THE EU



2011 marks 15 years of the existence of the European Solvents Industry Group (ESIG). In this special issue of our regular newsletter, "Solutions", ESIG celebrates its many milestones and achievements since its launch in 1996, not least its efforts to increase regulator and public awareness of the benefits of solvents in a vast range of industries and applications.

ESIG represents the major European producers of oxygenated and hydrocarbon solvents, including big multinationals, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By building alliances, sharing information and sponsoring dialogue with industry partners, downstream users and other stakeholders, ESIG actively promotes the sustainable, safe and responsible use of solvents.

The solvent industry directly employs more than 10,000 people in Europe and indirectly accounts for more than 10 million jobs, with over 500,000 European companies using solvents in a huge variety of different applications. More than 80% of these companies are SMEs.

ESIG is a joint activity of the Oxygenated Solvents Producers Association (OSPA) and the Hydrocarbon Solvents Producers Association (HSPA).

15 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

For more than a decade, ESIG has been the key driver behind the solvent industry's efforts to be responsible and sustainable, and substantially improve the handling of solvents.



Actively supporting solvent users in the workplace to address health, safety and environmental issues

ESIG has been proactive in providing practical support and advice to its members and downstream users, with sustained efforts to improve health, safety and environmental performance.

In this context, a vast range of training and support media are available: some of the most prominent examples of materials produced are the "Dos and Don'ts" poster, two ESIG DVDs, and various **best practice guidelines**, all of which have been very well received and are even used as official vocational training elements in several EU countries and beyond.

It is worth noting that all media are available free of charge from the secretariat, in whatever quantity required, as part of the solvent industry's strong commitment to the principles of health and safety in the workplace, as well as its Responsible Care® initiative.



Sharing best practices to promote the sustainable, safe and responsible use of solvents beyond regulatory requirements

One of ESIG's main objectives since its launch has been to enable communication and sharing of best practices in the responsible use of solvents in a practical, clear and concise way.

Solvent users, helped by their suppliers, have voluntarily and continually strived to reduce emissions and enhance working practices - with tangible results. This is why sharing case studies and examples from the supply chain are essential to such improvements. The aim of the **ESIG Product Stewardship Award** was, from the outset, to recognise companies implementing innovative ways of reducing the impact of solvent use on the environment and health, and disseminate this information so that other solvent users and handlers could also introduce similar measures beyond regulatory requirements.

For example, solvent producers were already distributing **Safety Data Sheets** about their products, which provide comprehensive safety and health information, long before they became a legal requirement in Europe.



Reducing ground level ozone to improve air quality

The solvent industry has made a substantial contribution to the reduction of ground level ozone: Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions from solvents decreased by more than 1.3M tonnes between 1990 and 2005 in the EU15 alone, a reduction of more than 30%, according to official EU data.

Between 2006 and 2009, three independent institutes conducted studies on the potential for further reductions in VOC emissions from solvents, based on their own air quality models as well as actual meteorological and economic data. TNO in the Netherlands with its Lotos-Euros Model, Ineris in France with its Chimère Model and Professor Derwent in the UK with his Harwell Trajectory Model all arrived at the same conclusion independently of each other: further reductions in VOC emissions from solvents will have a close-to-zero impact on ozone*.

ESIG has played a significant role in achieving these reductions, through the development of a set of guidelines (also known as BREFs) to help ESIG members comply with the Solvents Emissions Directive (SED), as well as producing tools to measure VOCs.

*For more information, please visit: <http://www.esig.org/en/regulatory-information/ozone-modelling>

Facilitating regulatory compliance by SMEs

One of ESIG's main missions is to assist solvent users, 80% of whom are SMEs, with regulatory compliance. To achieve this objective, ESIG has issued several sets of easy-to-understand guidelines for the different pieces of existing air quality legislation, like the SED, organised Q&A sessions over the internet, and compiled a variety of safety media on different topics.

One of the most recent examples is the REACH Generic Exposure Scenarios (GES) document, that ESIG proactively pioneered and piloted for the entire chemical industry in Europe in cooperation with several downstream user associations. A standardised catalogue was created with the aim of helping ESIG members and downstream users by simplifying the process of submitting exposure scenarios. A huge added advantage is more harmonised communication between suppliers and downstream users over several application segments, leading to substantial savings in time, resources and costs along the value chain.

Testifying to the success of the GES initiative is the European Chemical Agency's endorsement of this approach, as well as the fact that CEFIC has rolled out the model to all other chemical sectors.



Highlighting the benefits of solvents for society

ESIG has developed a strong communications programme, which includes the development of important tools in up to 17 languages, to share information and facilitate dialogue between key stakeholders on issues affecting the industry. For instance, the **Solvents Family Brochure** shows how solvents are an invaluable solution for industries ranging from pharmaceuticals and microelectronics to domestic cleaning, personal care and printing. Other materials include a periodic newsletter, posters, DVDs and the ESIG homepage (www.esig.org), covering all topics related to solvents.

ESIG is also committed to engaging in an active dialogue with regulators, industry partners and independent institutes at all levels to find common solutions on how to live in a better environment. Very recently, all EU 27 trade unions and employer associations recommended ESIG's safety material to all their members in a joint declaration with ESIG.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The achievements of the last 15 years are certainly cause for celebration. However, the solvent industry recognises that there is still work to be done, and will continue with its efforts to make its products as environmentally friendly and safe to use as possible. In this respect, there are still many challenges ahead, but ESIG is determined to face them head on and is constantly looking for cooperation partners.

ESIG will therefore keep on engaging with its members and key audiences to foster an informed debate about solvents, as well

as promote health, safety and environmental protection and best practices in the use of solvents in the workplace. To this end, it will produce further support materials for all solvent users.

At the same time, ESIG will maintain its active role in upcoming regulatory issues that concern the solvent industry, and will continue to ensure that the industry's contribution to developing legislation is communicated to all relevant stakeholders in the most effective way possible.

SOLUTIONS IS PRODUCED BY THE EUROPEAN SOLVENTS INDUSTRY GROUP.

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