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FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



Dear Readers,

In this summer edition of Solutions, we are delighted to update you on some of the main priority areas outlined in our December newsletter.

Primarily, the publication of a report by the European Environment Agency containing the latest emissions and projections data for Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions from Member States. The report shows that emissions

are at 83% of ceilings for all EU27 Member States required by the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), showing a clear decline in VOC emissions over the last years.

This positive trend has been driven by the efforts of the solvents industry and its downstream users to substantially reduce VOC emissions. Our progress in this area, however, is not a reason to rest on our laurels and we will continue to maintain a close dialogue with European stakeholders.

At the international level, we welcome the adoption in May of the revised Gothenburg Protocol reached by the United Nations Economic Community for Europe (UNECE). This body sets targets for emissions of different air pollutants to be met by 2020 (see page 3).

Under the auspices of the European Committee for Standardisation, we initiated a project in the first quarter to develop European standards for bio-based solvents. A team of experts from among our members and other interested stakeholders are actively supporting the European Commission Strategy "Innovating for Sustainable Growth: a Bioeconomy for Europe" (see page 2).

Other projects are on the way, such as safety in the workplace and the updating of our best practice guidelines for the safe use of solvents. We have also produced a new video on the safe use of IBCs which will be released in the summer.

For now, let me wish you an enjoyable read of this newsletter and don't hesitate to consult our homepage on www.esig.org, which is regularly updated with news.

Antoine Brossier



DEVELOPMENT OF EU STANDARDS ON BIO SOLVENTS



As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy to foster smart and green growth, the European Commission is looking towards a more sustainable use of its resources, including the opening up of new markets for bio-based products*. Earlier this year, it published the communication "*Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe*" which paves the way for future action in this area and also contributes significantly to the EU objectives "*Innovation Union*" and "*A Resource Efficient Europe*". The ultimate goal is to achieve a more innovative European economy by ensuring that demand for sustainable produce as well as the sustainable use of renewable biological resources for industrial purposes are maintained, whilst upholding biodiversity and environmental protection.

In particular, the European Commission recommends increasing the use of bio-based products by 2020. However, in order to do so, definitions, assessment methodologies, labels and standards, which are often absent in this policy area, will need to be developed.

Within this context, the European Commission has mandated the European Committee for Standardization to develop standards for bio-based polymers, lubricants, surfactants and solvents. The mandate's target is to expand the growth of bio-solvents.

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is a non-profit organisation that provides voluntary standards for products and services. Through this, CEN promotes free trade in Europe and the removal of barriers for the benefit of both industry and consumers. CEN has 32 national members participating in its activities through its National Standardization Bodies. The first meeting to discuss standards on bio-based products took place in February 2012 and will now convene regularly over the next five years.

* Bio-based products are products that are wholly or partly derived from materials of biological origin, excluding materials embedded in geological formations and/or fossilised, CEN - Report on Mandate M/429.

ESIG is keen on contributing to the CEN initiative and has taken a leading role in working with other interested stakeholders at EU level in order to reach an agreement on a common definition for bio-solvents and to carry out an impact assessment on human health and the environment.

The objective is to develop a framework to ensure that the implementation of bio-solvent standards is based on sound science, in line with the key principles of technological neutrality and performance driven standards. As part of ESIG's strong commitment to continuous improvement of sustainability in the industry, we are also actively involved in the CEN bio-based product horizontal taskforce working towards a definition for bio-based content, sustainability criteria and the development of Life-Cycle Assessments.

ESIG welcomes the setting of standards for these products as this would ensure that bio-solvents are regulated and managed in the same way as other chemicals in the context of REACH. It would also allow industry to develop bio-solvents whilst ensuring a level playing field between different products.

CEFIC SUSTAINABILITY REPORT RELEASED



The European chemical industry is determined to play a key role in sustainable development to meet the needs of 9 billion people by 2050. To this end, the first CEFIC Sustainability Report entitled "The Chemical Industry in Europe: Towards Sustainability" was unveiled on 8 May at a special event in the European Parliament. The event attracted more than 150 participants from the EU institutions, chemical industry and media. The European chemical industry's performance on economic and social development and environmental protection was presented, setting a benchmark against which it will measure itself in the future.

Case studies from chemicals companies, national associations and Cefic sector groups illustrated their contributions to sustainability; such as energy-efficient water purification, light weight materials for cars, improved insulation for buildings as well as ESIG's tailor-made sustainability programme supporting downstream users.

Paper copies are available upon request; alternatively the report can be downloaded from the Cefic website on www.cefic.org

AIR QUALITY: REVISION OF THE GOTHENBURG PROTOCOL ADOPTED

A revision of the Gothenburg Protocol, an extension of the 1979 Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, was agreed on 4 May. It aims to abate acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone and sets emission ceilings at international level for four pollutants: Sulphur, Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Ammonia (NH₃) as well as upper limits for other emission sources.

Following years of wide-ranging and intense negotiations, the new text of the Protocol will now include national emission reduction commitments for main air pollutants to be achieved in 2020 and beyond. The revised Protocol will include — for the first time — emission reduction commitments for fine particulate matter, the pollutant whose ambient air concentrations exceeds air quality standards throughout Europe.

The revision follows an assessment of progress achieved under the Protocol since 2010. The EU, Norway, Switzerland and the United States are now required to formally ratify the revised text. Russia, Canada, the Ukraine and Georgia, who participated in the negotiations, may also seek to ratify this new text.

ESIG has been actively working on controlling VOC emissions from solvents for over 15 years to contribute to the improvement of air quality at EU level. We are supporting the development of a new inventory to more accurately calculate VOC emissions for each end-use sector, country or group of countries within the EU 27 Member States based on actual sales of solvents instead of estimates. The ESIG winter newsletter will cover these new inventories in more detail to show how they compare with current estimates produced by the EU institutions.

PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST SUBSTANCE EVALUATION LIST UNDER REACH



The first substance evaluation list under the REACH substance evaluation process, better known as the Community Rolling Action Plan (CoRAP), was published on February 29. As part of the REACH regulation, the aim of the CoRAP is to evaluate the registered substances.

Solvents n-hexane, iso-heptane, methyl-cyclohexane and toluene have been included in the list to be submitted to Member States

for review. ESIG would like to point out that inclusion in this list does not mean that the substance poses a risk to human health or the environment, but rather that as part of the E (evaluation) of REACH they will go at this stage to the process to assess whether or not a risk exists.

The lead Member State responsible will have one year in which to evaluate the substance it has chosen from the CoRAP list. Once evaluation is complete, registrants may be asked to submit further information if necessary in order to clarify a suspected risk. Other outcomes of this substance evaluation may result in Classification and Labelling of the substance, inclusion of the substance in the Candidate List as a Substance of Very High Concern (SVHC) or restrictions on its use.

In addition to this, the solvents industry has undertaken exhaustive analyses of the toxicological, eco-toxicological and physico-chemical data and in-depth risk assessments for all products which have demonstrated no risk for use. Registrants of CoRAP substances will be given an opportunity to comment before any final decision is taken. Draft decisions will need to be reviewed and agreed on by the other Member States, ECHA and the Member State Committee before becoming effective.

EXEMPLARY INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE THE SAFE USE OF SOLVENTS

Under the tenets of Responsible Care®, ESIG seeks to ensure that best practices about the safe use of solvent products are proactively communicated. With this principle in mind, ESIG initiated a Product Stewardship Award to reward companies that demonstrate excellence, innovation and continuous improvement in the use of solvents, health and safety and environmental protection beyond regulatory requirements. In addition, the sharing of information and adoption of best practices with other solvent users and handlers, including checklists, performance indicators and verification procedures, not only helps users to operate within the regulatory framework but also proves to be economically efficient.

Last year, ESIG was very pleased to announce that Multisol Group, a multinational specialist chemical distributor, won the 8th prestigious ESIG Product Stewardship Award. The recognition has led to preparations for a local event this year, to celebrate Multisol's reward and raise awareness of the ESIG Product Stewardship Award.

The two runners-up in last year's award merit attention for their sheer effort to ensure employees work in a safe and environmentally responsible environment and for inspiring the judges with their eco-friendly solutions and continuous investment in safety and environmental protection, beyond state-of-the-art technology.



CG Chemikalien, an owner operated, medium-sized business stood out for its new facilities to ensure and improve the safety and quality of the processes and transport through new technology as well as for motivating employees. Among the principles the company implements to improve environmental protection are rehearse

accident scenarios, open dialogue with authorities, regular crisis exercises and drills and the involvement of all customers, suppliers and external services in measures. The company's joining of the Ethical and Business Principles of the European Association of Chemical Distributors (FECC), a voluntary initiative of companies to demonstrate their commitment to conducting business in an ethical manner, is further testament to its social and ethical responsibility. CG Chemikalien's investment in facility and occupational safety make it a true specialist in the safe solution for solvents in the supply chain.



Renner Italia, a young and dynamic company producing solvent based wood coating systems who adopted exemplary measures to build a new generation plant guaranteeing high environmental performance. It has been investing heavily in new production facilities such as automation, storage systems and closed mixing tanks for the production of solvent-based coatings – placing the company at the forefront in the safe use of solvents.

RELEASE OF NEW DVD ON THE USE OF INTERMEDIATE BULK CONTAINERS



Over the summer we will release our new DVD on Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs) which has been produced in cooperation with the Solvents Industry Association (SIA) in the UK to increase awareness of safe IBC handling among solvent users and to promote best practice down through the supply chain.

The video offers practical advice on the different types of IBCs available for the transport and storage of fluids and bulk materials as well as comprehensive recommendations on storage, stacking and regular inspection.

This production is another example of the strong commitment of the solvents industry towards the support of a safe and responsible use of solvents. The DVD is available in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian language versions and can be watched online or downloaded from the ESIG website. It can also be obtained free of charge from esig@cefic.be

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