

FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL .....	1
ESIG SUPPORTS THE EU-OSHA CAMPAIGN 2014 .....	1
REACH – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH ECHA .....	2
MILESTONE REACHED IN EU STANDARDISATION OF BIO-BASED SOLVENTS .....	2
ESIG PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP AWARD .....	3
EU'S NEW AIR QUALITY PACKAGE ANNOUNCED .....	3
FLAMMABILITY GUIDE AVAILABLE .....	4
FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK .....	4
CEFIC ADDRESSES CHEMICALS SAFETY IN THE VALUE CHAIN .....	4

## FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Dear Readers,

While most of the attention this year has been focused on the European Parliament elections, we have good news on several regulatory developments.

ESIG has played an active role in setting European standards on bio-based products by working closely with European regulators as well as leading the Working Group of the CEN Technical Committee on bio-based solvents. ESIG has also increased its engagement with ECHA via a platform that aims to contribute to the pragmatic implementation of REACH. Furthermore, our air quality team has built on last year's achievements and has developed inventories of VOC emissions from solvents to provide reliable data. This will help member states to meet their VOC targets under the National Emission Ceilings Directive.



As part of ESIG's continuous commitment to ensure a safe and healthy work environment we not only supported last year's EU-OSHA campaign 'Working together for risk prevention', but will also join this year's campaign for a healthy workplace. I am also proud to announce that ESIG participated in the first International Congress for Safety and Health at Work in Poland, and would like to draw your attention to our updated Flammability Guide that is now available in print to allow for even easier distribution among your peers.

And finally, after three excellent years working in Brussels for the Solvents Industry, the end of my term as Director General is coming to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the excellent cooperation over the last three years, and for the great support from colleagues, members and all persons I have worked with during my term here. My successor will be announced after the summer break and will be introduced in the next winter Newsletter.

Happy reading and best wishes for a sunny and relaxing summer.  
Antoine Brossier

## ESIG SUPPORTS THE EU-OSHA CAMPAIGN 2014

**Healthy  
Workplaces  
Manage  
Stress**



ESIG is delighted to announce that it has joined the Europe-wide campaign: '**Healthy Workplaces, Manage Stress**', launched on 7 April by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). The campaign will run for two years and aims to provide ways to manage stress and psychosocial risks in the workplace.

Like EU-OSHA, ESIG's objective is to make Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. That is why ESIG also actively supported EU-OSHA's previous campaign, 'Working together for risk prevention'. After a successful collaboration with EU-OSHA throughout last year's campaign, ESIG will again join forces with employers and workers to help organisations keep stress levels in the workplace to a minimum.

For more information please visit the ESIG website:  
[www.esig.org/en/responsible-care/healthy-workplaces](http://www.esig.org/en/responsible-care/healthy-workplaces)



## REACH – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH ECHA

The REACH regulation entered into force on 1 June 2007, aiming to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks posed by chemicals. At the same time, REACH is intended to enhance competitiveness and innovation in the EU chemicals industry. In short, REACH establishes formal procedures for collecting and assessing information on the properties and hazards of substances. The REACH Directive obliges ESIG (and its members) to demonstrate how solvents can be used safely.

ESIG fully supports REACH. The regulation is consistent with ESIG's own principles of evidence-based science and the proper risk management of chemicals. In the coming ten years, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) aims to evaluate all dossiers and substances, and ESIG intends to continue contributing to the pragmatic implementation of REACH.

ESIG is committed to supporting ECHA in increasing the efficiency and transparency of the evaluation process. It does so early on in the process by encouraging ECHA to share its upcoming evaluation plans with the industry, its process, timetable and expectations prior to initiating a dossier review. In this regard



Cefic has established a platform - to which ESIG contributes via its technical group - which helps identify ways and opportunities for a constructive dialogue with ECHA such as by proposing that ECHA invites industry representatives to be formal and active members of all committees.

At ESIG, we will continue to engage directly with regulators and relevant stakeholders to ensure that the principles of REACH are understood, agreed and applied throughout the EU for the benefit of all its citizens.

## MILESTONE REACHED IN EU STANDARDISATION OF BIO-BASED SOLVENTS



Two years after the European Commission launched its Communication, 'Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe', which aimed to open up the market for bio-based products, a great deal of progress has been made with regards to standardisation.

The European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) Technical Committee 411 (TC411) has just completed the technical specification on bio-based solvents. It will be sent to the national committees for review. These committees will then have six months to come back to CEN with any relevant questions or comments.

In Europe thousands of producers and manufacturers and more than 10 million workers use solvents daily. The solvent producing industry is composed of both small and medium-sized enterprises as well as multinationals. Downstream users generally tend to be SMEs and micro-SMEs. Solvents are mainly produced from fossil feedstock. The amount of fossil feedstock used for solvent production is however low with less than 1 % of the total world's fossil feedstock consumption. The purpose of the standardisation document is that every statement with regard to performance, health, safety and environment and bio-based content has to be determined (measured or calculated) for the solvent placed on the market. This approach intends to strengthen the reputation of "bio-based solvents" and the confidence of the customer in this product group.

The Technical Specification sets requirements for bio-based solvents in terms of properties, limits, application classes and test methods. It lays down the characteristics and details for assessment of bio-based solvents:

1. fit for purpose in terms of performance related properties.
2. comply with the requirements regarding the health, safety and environment which apply to general solvents;
3. are derived from a certain minimum percentage of biomass; and
4. comply with at least similar sustainability criteria as comparable (regular) solvents.

This preliminary phase will soon be completed and demonstrates that the agreement on European standards concerning bio-based solvents is well underway.

ESIG, which is a member of the TC411, has played an active role in this first phase of setting European standards on bio-based solvents, through the definition of horizontal criteria (such as bio-based content and sustainability). In addition, ESIG leads Working Group 2, which is responsible for defining standards for bio-based solvents.

The Renewable Raw Material Group, of which ESIG is also a member, supports the definition of the current framework for bio-based solvents. Finally, ESIG is also a member of the Commission's Expert Group for Bio-based Products (DG ENTR), which defines specific criteria such as access to feedstock, innovation in bio-products, access to market criteria and public procurement, as well as participating in developing communication criteria around bio-based products which will help buyers and consumers better understand the added value of bio-based products.

ESIG believes bio-based solvents should be regulated and managed based on sound scientific data, thereby ensuring a level playing field in Europe. ESIG therefore aims to develop robust technical data and performance assessments for bio-based solvents.

## ESIG PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP AWARD



Since 1999, ESIG has organised the ESIG Product Stewardship Award. This award highlights the achievements of companies that pursue high standards, maintain best practices and seek innovative ways of achieving health and environmental improvements in their use of solvents. The award acknowledges the hard work and commitment to excellence demonstrated by our members and partners.

The call for entries for the 9<sup>th</sup> Product Stewardship Award is now closed. We would like to thank everyone who submitted applications! Entries were received from companies all along the industry's supply chain and from many different European countries. An independent jury, composed of senior representatives from

the European Institutions as well as media and trade associations specialising in health, safety and environmental issues, is now reviewing and assessing all of the submissions. The judges will be looking for innovative projects which showcase significant health and safety improvements going above and beyond what is required by current regulations and requirements. The 2014 winner will be announced at an award ceremony this autumn.

The two previous winners of this award were Multisol Group (2011) and SC Jäklechemie (2009), specialist chemical distributors. Multisol was recognised for its outstanding work in increasing awareness among students about the benefits of solvents, so helping to change the often negative perception of the industry among young people. SC Jäklechemie received the award for its impressive social responsibility scheme and product stewardship programme.

For more information about the ESIG Product Stewardship Award and its past winners, please visit: [www.esig.org/en/responsible-care/esig-product-stewardship-award](http://www.esig.org/en/responsible-care/esig-product-stewardship-award)

## EU'S NEW AIR QUALITY PACKAGE ANNOUNCED

Following a comprehensive assessment of the EU's air policy that started in 2011, in December 2013 the European Commission published its ambitious new air quality policy package. The package focuses on the continued improvement of air quality in Europe and includes new initiatives and measures as well as revising specific legislation.

The new EU Air Quality policy package includes the following components:

- A Communication from the Commission on a new Clean Air Programme for Europe that sets specific measures to ensure that existing air quality targets are met in the short term. It also sets new objectives for the period up to 2030.
- A proposal for the revision of the current National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD) which sets stricter national emission ceilings for six substances one of them being volatile organic compounds (NMVOC).
- A proposal for a new Directive to reduce pollution from medium-sized combustion installations.
- A proposal to ratify the UNECE Gothenburg Protocol

The current NECD was adopted in 2001 and sets emission ceilings for four substances, namely sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>). The proposal for the review of the NECD brings the 2020 ceilings in line with the agreed Gothenburg Protocol and proposes new national emission reduction commitments to be reached by 2030. The proposal also covers two additional substances fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), with a focus on black carbon, and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). This proposal will be amended by the European Parliament and Council over the coming months.

ESIG welcomes the proposed emission reduction objectives for 2020, but also believes that for longer term goals the European Commission should also take into account the feasibility and market implications of achieving any new targets beyond 2020.

In parallel, ESIG has proactively developed inventories of VOC emissions from solvents in order to provide reliable emissions data and to help support member states in meeting their VOC regulatory requirements under the National Emission Ceilings Directive. The results of the project have been welcomed by leading member state officials and European experts in Air Quality and atmospheric science. ESIG has committed to update this data regularly.

For more information on ESIG's VOC emissions inventory, please visit: [www.ceip.at](http://www.ceip.at)





## FLAMMABILITY GUIDE AVAILABLE

The most common hazards associated with industrial solvents are flammability and static electricity. In order to reduce workers' risks and prevent accidents, people working with solvents need to have information about potential dangers and appropriate safety procedures, as well as receive adequate training, so that they can take all of the necessary precautions and implement safety measures.

ESIG has therefore updated the Flammability Guide to take into account new preventive measures. This guide explains the main characteristics of solvent flammability and provides both general advice as well as instructions on how to handle solvents safely. The guide also identifies the technical aspects of potential flammability and ignition sources. The final section of the guide addresses static electricity and how it is best managed.

This guide also provides the **top ten tips for a safer workplace**, which include:



- Have an emergency plan
- Eliminate all possible ignition sources
- Ensure proper ventilation
- Provide information and adequate training
- And more...

If you would like to read the top ten tips, as well as gain a better understanding of necessary safety and preventive measures, you can request a printed copy from the ESIG secretariat by sending an e-mail to [esig@cefic.be](mailto:esig@cefic.be). The guide can also be downloaded from the ESIG website: [www.esig.org](http://www.esig.org).

“ The ESIG Flammability Guide provides a comprehensive view of the inherent risks associated with solvent use. By summarising all relevant data in a single document, it allows users to gain a rounded view of the subject, and understand the steps that can be taken to mitigate risks in their daily operations. ”

Karl Shone,

Technical Development Manager, Multisol Group

## FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK



On 10 April, the First International Congress for Safety and Health at Work took place in Poland, organised by a number of different associations dealing with issues involving health and safety at work. The congress addressed the question of how accidents at work can be avoided, as well as exploring ways to build a culture of safety in the workplace.

Director General Antoine Brossier spoke about ESIG's experience and best practices in the safe use of solvents, highlighting the need to make safety in the workplace a priority for manufacturers and downstream users. A robust safety culture is an essential ingredient for all companies and must include appropriate training of

employees, effective safety targets for all levels, as well as rewards for successfully avoiding accidents at work.

More information about ESIG's training materials and its guidelines to ensure the safe use of solvents are available on the ESIG website: [www.esig.org](http://www.esig.org)

“ More than 300 persons attended the Conference and participants were very impressed by the activities deployed by ESIG and its members to ensure effective accident prevention in the chemical industry. The presentation from Antoine Brossier enabled a valuable exchange with the audience about how to establish and develop a safe working environment at all levels of a company. ”

Pawel Rozowski,

Vice President, Health and Safety at Work Association, Poland

## CEFIC ADDRESSES CHEMICALS SAFETY IN THE VALUE CHAIN

Cefic has released a new publication which adds to the debate on chemicals safety in the value chain, and which underlines its commitment to the highest level of product safety. The publication, entitled '*Chemicals safety in the value chain – how the European chemical industry manages safe use of chemicals*', covers the basic principles of hazard, risk assessment and risk management, and sheds light on what the industry is doing to respond to concerns about safety, health and the environment. It also provides insights on the public debate and regulatory process of REACH.

ESIG's continuous cooperation with downstream users, and its on-going safety and product stewardship activities, receive explicit

acknowledgement as successful examples of how to achieve a high level of consumer safety. Special credit is also given to ESIG's partnership with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) under the 2012-2013 '*Working Together for Risk Prevention*' campaign. The campaign not only facilitated a constructive exchange of ideas, it also paved the way to improve safety at work.

As a signatory of the REACH regulation, Cefic is demonstrating its commitment to continuously improving the safe and appropriate use of chemicals.

The publication can be ordered from the ESIG secretariat by sending an e-mail to: [esig@cefic.be](mailto:esig@cefic.be).

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