

SOLUTIONS

Summer 2020



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Editorial



Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to introduce this new edition of our summer SOLUTIONS newsletter. I am aware that times during the COVID-19 crisis have not been easy, but I sincerely hope that you and your families have come through it safe and sound.

This newsletter does not have its usual format as many events have been cancelled or postponed. However, we still want to give you a short overview of our association's activities during the first months of 2020. We remained engaged as much as possible and organised a few events before the outbreak, such as the annual meeting of our downstream user group, ESVOC, and kept the focus on the ongoing key activities.

Furthermore, Petrochemicals Europe, an industry sector of Cefic, which includes ESIG, has a new Executive Director, Frans Stokman, and a new Technical Manager, Thomas Vanfleteren, who supports us in our toxicology and regulatory activities. Welcome to the team, Thomas!

I would also like to invite you to share any comments or contact us should you wish to receive more information on specific topics.

With my best personal regards,

Cornelia Tietz, Secretary General



COVID-19: SOLVENTS ROLE TO MANUFACTURE DISINFECTANTS

As the COVID-19 crisis unfolded, some solvents came under the spotlight as they are used to manufacture the disinfectants crucial to fighting the pandemic.

Isopropanol (also called propan-2-ol or isopropylalcohol (IPA)) is a solvent used in the manufacture of a wide variety of industrial and household chemicals and is a common ingredient in chemicals such as antiseptics, disinfectants, and detergents. Propanol (also called propan-1-ol, 1-propyl alcohol, n-propyl alcohol, or n-propanol) is another oxygenated solvent and alcohol used in disinfectants.

Following the adoption of a derogation to the Biocides Product Regulation for substances with reported shortages, the solvents industry and its downstream users have also been able to manufacture hand sanitisers and other disinfectants provided they comply with [the WHO guidelines](#).

Members of the Oxygenated Solvents Producers' Association (OSPA) strived to meet the growing demand for these solvents and took several initiatives to make sure those substances are supplied in sufficient quantities to manufacture disinfectants. They also took dedicated local or national initiatives to meet the demand of critical supplies.

You will find all these initiatives and others on the [Cefic map](#).

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER SECTORS:

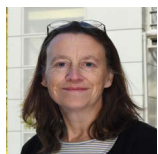
Fecc Toolbox

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Fecc has put all its efforts in supporting the chemical distribution sector with easy-to-use guidance materials to help their stakeholders cope with unprecedented challenges.

Besides regular pan-European updates on all COVID-19 related issues and developments, Fecc created a **COVID-19 toolbox**, which is available to everyone on its [website](#) in a joint interest to enhance safety at the workplace. The COVID-19 toolbox includes a series of infographics, posters and relevant guidance documents to help Fecc's member companies protect their staff, business partners, service providers and all other stakeholders against the risk of virus infections.

ESVOC: ANNUAL MEETING & UPDATES

Following its relaunch last year, the core group of ESVOC, the European Solvents Downstream User Coordination Group (which brings together 30 downstream user associations), held a successful annual meeting in January. The event featured two prominent guest speakers: Nicola Carslaw from York University, one of the leading scientists and experts in the field of Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) and Jeroen Kuenen from TNO, a Dutch organisation for applied scientific research.



Nicola Carslaw gave an overview of ongoing issues and modeling studies on air quality. She chairs the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) initiative, [INDAIRPOLLNET](#) (INDoor AIR POLLution NETwork). The network

aims to improve understanding of the cause of high concentrations of indoor air pollutants and identify appropriate mitigation strategies that optimise Indoor Air Quality (IAQ).



Jeroen Kuenen summarised the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), transposed into EU law by the National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive.

As the co-chair of the expert panel on Combustion and Industry of the UNECE [Task force on Emission Inventories and Projections](#) (TFEIP), he leads the work on the relevant chapters of the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP) guidebook on how emission inventories are to be conducted by each Member State. Therefore, he also presented the work of the TFEIP. TNO has been commissioned by ESIG to compile the VOC solvents inventories.

The members reelected Alain D'Haese from the Europe Aerosol Federation (FEA) as ESVOC Chair in 2020.



Professional and consumer applications group activities

The ESVOC professional and consumer applications group has been particularly active:

- A new focus paper entitled “[Solvents and VOCs](#)” has been published. It explains what solvents' VOCs are, how they are regulated and for which products VOC emissions cannot be further reduced in indoor applications.
- The review of the [ESVOC technical paper](#) related to indoor air quality has also been finalised. It supports the EU-LCI (Lowest Concentration of Interest) value concept to regulate indoor air emissions.

The group closely follows the progress of the delegated act of VOC classes for EU-wide harmonisation developed under the Construction Product Directive. The EU Lowest Concentration of Interest (LCI) values are key parameters in the delegated act. The LCI is defined as the lowest concentration above which the pollutant may have some effect on people in the indoor environment,

according to best professional judgement. [An updated EU-LCI master list](#) was published in December 2019.

More values are currently being derived. ESIG is now part of this EU expert group (as the official Cefic representative).

And to conclude: ESIG is also the focal point for Cefic to the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee on Ambient Air (CEN TC 264). The EU Air Quality Directive provides that VOC precursors must be measured. However, no reference methods are available yet. Therefore, the European Commission (EC) mandated CEN to develop methods to measure Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) that are ozone precursors in ambient air.



The CEN TC 264 (Ambient Air) Working Group 13 on ozone precursors and benzene will develop relevant standard(s).

Industrial applications group activities

With the 16th meeting of the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) Article 75 Committee cancelled, a written procedure for approving the BAT reference document (BREF) on Surface Treatment using Organic Solvents (STS) was started instead. EU Member States had until 17 April to express their opinion on the Implementing Decision establishing Best Available Techniques (BAT) conclusions under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) for surface treatment using organic solvents including the preservation of wood and wood products with chemicals (STS).



Now that the Article 75 Committee has approved the BAT document, it will be published in the Official Journal in a few months. As of the publication date, Member States will have four years to enforce it. All the BREFs are available [HERE](#).

As the STS BREF work is over, members of the group are planning to look beyond the EU and will engage with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UNECE Task Force on Technical Economic issues (TFTEI). Both organisations are involved in more global BAT projects with regards to solvents VOC emissions. For ESVOC, meeting with their representatives will be an opportunity to find out how to get involved in spreading BATs related to their applications.

SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE CATEGORIES (SPERCs)

ESIG was the first industry group to finalise the review of its Specific Environmental Release Categories (SpERC) to help industry and downstream users comply with REACH requirements. In an article on SpERCs in the summer issue of the [Solutions Newsletter](#) last year, we explained their history.

Under REACH, registrants are required to prepare a chemical safety assessment defining the conditions of use for substances that are produced over 10 tonnes per year. If the substance is considered hazardous, the registrant is required to prepare exposure scenarios explaining the appropriate risk management measures to ensure that the chemical can be used safely for all relevant applications.

In 2016, a standard factsheet and background document format were developed in close co-operation between industries and ECHA in order to improve the SpERC documentation. Standardized Quality Checks were agreed upon to increase the credibility of the SpERCs towards regulators. ESIG now completed the updates using new formats and published them on [its website](#):

- 40 SpERC factsheets covering 22 use scenarios and related background documents,
- quality checks for those seven scenarios for which the release factors were revised,
- all factsheets combined in a Chesar file,
- all SpERCs included in [the use maps](#) too.



Once ECHA has validated it, the whole package will also be updated in its [use map library](#).

SOLVENTS@WORK CAMPAIGN

ESIG had planned to continue promoting its Product Stewardship materials for the safe use of solvents in 2020 at selected and relevant events throughout Europe. A flyer summarising all available tools (films, posters or best practice guidelines) has been distributed via national chemical or downstream user associations and through the national focus points of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA).



Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, most of the events where we intended to promote our solvents@work campaign have been postponed or cancelled. We still had the opportunity to present our materials to the European Chemical Distributors' association (Fecce) Safety Health and Environment (SHE) Committee in March 2020 and we hope that we will be able to participate in a number of postponed events. A live webinar will be organised on 2 July instead.

All Product Stewardship materials are available on the ESIG website. The printed versions of posters and best practice guidelines can also be ordered via the ESIG Secretariat.

The films have been produced in close co-operation with the UK Solvents Industry Association and most of them are available in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish. The film on "Solvents and the safe use of gloves" is currently being reviewed and a new one will be produced over summer, so watch out for it! **And should you plan an occupational safety and health (OSH) related event later this year, do not hesitate to invite us.**

For further information, please find all our solvents@work materials [HERE](#) as well [as the flyer summarising our tools](#).



LIVE WEBINAR: SOLVENTS@WORK

Listen to our experts on

2 July from 15:00 - 16:30

You will get an overview of the Product Stewardship materials available on our website.

[Register HERE](#)

ESIG SOLVENTS AWARD

Readers will well remember the ESIG SOLVENTS AWARD 2019 and its winner PACKWISE, a startup from Dresden, Germany that was rewarded for its “Smart IBC industrial containers”, a project innovating in the field of distribution and digitalisation.



Packwise has now started serial production and will hold a virtual event to celebrate and announce this new milestone using this occasion to highlight once more the Solvents Award in a local celebration. We wish Packwise much success with its application!

Looking ahead: The next Solvents Award should be organised in 2021 with the application period running from 1 February 2021 to 30 April 2021. The announcement and promotion of the Award should start later this year. The ESIG Solvents Award aims at highlighting not only safe but also sustainable use of solvents with respect to health and safety, environmental improvements or product performance or any combination of these. Applications will be open to downstream users of solvents, including anyone involved in the distribution, formulation, storage or use of a solvent and includes their trade associations. More information is available [HERE](#).

SOLVENTS TRAININGS 2020 CANCELLED

For several years, ESIG has been organising in cooperation with the Solvents Industry Association (SIA), the UK based solvents industry association, [trainings sessions](#) for its members as well as non-members. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the two dates scheduled in 2020 have been cancelled. The trainings will resume as soon as the sanitary situation allows it.

SOLVENTS VOC INVENTORIES 2018

[The 2018 Solvent Volatile Organic Compounds \(VOC\) inventories](#) have been finalised and the results are now available on the ESIG website.

ESIG is working on improving the methodology under the supervision and guidance of TNO, a Dutch organisation for applied scientific research, which also establishes the emission inventories in the Netherlands. The aim is for Solvents VOC inventories to be as transparent as possible, covering all years from 1999 onwards to enable the Member States to use fully industry data.

DOWNSTREAM USER BOX

European Council of the Paint, Printing Ink and Artists' Colours Industry appoints new Managing Director



Christel Davidson joined CEPE earlier this year and officially took over leadership from Jan van der Meulen this spring. While new to the coatings industry, she has extensive experience in EU affairs having worked for over 20 years for several European trade associations and an environmental NGO.

Her debut at CEPE was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the issue of COVID-19 ranks high on the agenda of CEPE, its current priorities remain unchanged, namely, the proposal for a restriction of intentionally added microplastics and biocides.

Regarding the microplastics restriction proposal, CEPE reckons that the scope of the proposal is too broad. It covers too many uses that have no release, and, although they are derogated from the prohibition of placing on the market, they are still subject to the reporting obligation. Therefore, CEPE suggests introducing a lower limit and to, critically, review redundant reporting obligations. CEPE believes that it is not the use, but the release of microplastics that is problematic. This has led CEPE to issue a customer guidance on how to clean brush rollers.

As critical components for water-based paints, biocides ensure product longevity and thereby contribute to the circular economy. Yet, the current regulatory set-up jeopardises the future availability of biocides. The current crisis has proven however their general usefulness. CEPE will continue to raise awareness and inform on the benefits of biocides.

With the ever-growing attention of the EU on sustainability related issues, the initiatives stemming from the European Green Deal i.e. the circular economy action plan and the upcoming Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability will also be taking centre stage in the coming months. It will also be an opportunity for the coatings sector to highlight its contribution to sustainability.

In this respect, CEPE and ESIG share similar views. Therefore, we are as committed as ever to working and contributing to the future successes of the ESVOC.

CEFIC BOX:

EU Green Deal: Climate Law, Industrial Strategy and Circular Economy

In March, the European Commission published three key Green Deal legislative proposals [the EU Climate Law](#), the EU's new industrial Strategy and the Circular Economy Action Plan. In reaction to the Climate Law, Cefic stated that the chemical industry supports the Green Deal and Europe's ambition to become climate neutral by 2050. In the framework of the Industrial Strategy, Cefic urged the EU institutions to adopt a "sectoral Green Deal for the chemical industry". It also stressed the fact that the industry enables a circular economy.

The European Climate Law sets the target for Europe to become Climate Neutral by 2050. A 2030 target has not yet been included, but a mechanism by which the Commission can change targets in the coming decades has been proposed.

The Industrial Policy Strategy includes a package to support the industry. The aim of the first package is to set the direction of travel for the EU economy while fostering growth, safeguarding competitiveness, enabling the "twin transition" (delivering on EU climate goals and establishing leadership in digital technologies) and navigating evolving trade relations.

The sustainable finance tool will steer investments from the private sector in the same direction. The Circular Economy Action Plan specifies measures for several key sectors. New initiatives will come for Electronics and ICT, Batteries and Vehicles, Packaging Plastics, Textiles, Construction and Food. Chemicals are cross-cutting topics for all these sectors. The communication announces the upcoming Chemical Strategy for Sustainability, which should be published in autumn. The new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) focuses on "the design and production for a circular economy, with the aim of ensuring that the resources used are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible".

To respond to the COVID-19 crisis, the European Commission published in May the proposal for a new [Recovery Package](#) and its adjusted Work Programme 2020. The Green deal will be key to the recovery strategy. A new funding mechanism called Next Generation EU (€750 billion), the pandemic crisis response fund (€540 billion) and the EU core budget (€1.1 trillion Multiannual Financial Framework), will help Europe shape its green, digital and resilient future.

For more information, please read the Cefic press releases on the [Climate Law](#) and [the Industrial Strategy and the Circular Economy Action Plan](#).

