

Press Release

REACH seminar evaluates consistency and efficiency of EU chemicals management policy for metals industry

Brussels, 24th October 2014 – During Eurometaux’s Chemicals Management Seminar, held in Brussels on 21-22 October, contributors from all levels of the REACH process conducted a retrospective overview of the metal industry’s experience with REACH and international chemicals management, and reflected together on common strategies towards 2020.

Dirk Vandenberghe, Eurometaux President and Metallo-Chimique CEO, joined the opening panel debate together with Geert Dancert (ECHA), Klaus Berend (European Commission, DG Enterprise), Hans Meijer (Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment), Alfons Westgeest (EUROBAT, the Association of European Automotive and Industrial Battery Manufacturers) and Vito Buonsante (Client Earth). The debate was moderated by Guy Thiran, Eurometaux’s Executive Director.

Geert Dancet and Klaus Berend acknowledged the pro-active and constructive attitude and contributions of Eurometaux and the metals consortia. They both provided points for further attention and suggestions for 2020 compliance.

Speaking after the seminar, Dirk Vandenberghe commented: *“Europe’s non-ferrous metals industry has taken a proactive role at all stages of the REACH process, and this Seminar allows us to collectively take stock of what has been achieved up until now. It also allows us to reflect on future strategies to deal with the many challenges that still remain. Implementing REACH is a collaborative process between legislators, industry and civil society, and Eurometaux encourages inclusive approaches wherever possible”.*

He went on to add that *“For the metals industry, REACH has increased knowledge on our materials and improved supply chain interaction. As we’ve heard today, metals companies have also acknowledged the value and necessity of including chemicals management in their business quality systems, as with safety”.*

“However, there remain free-riders and a lack of efficiency in the choice and prioritisation of risk management measures to regulate hazardous substances. Too often, disproportionate measures are applied that focus on hazard rather than risk, stigmatising metals without any tangible benefit to human health or the environment just because they are well studied and documented. As an industry, we want to be part of the solution, proposing measures to increase the transparency and predictability of that process”.

The workshop’s second day provided the opportunity for Eurometaux members and stakeholders to discuss experiences and define milestone steps for chemicals management implementation, in order to help the sector in meeting the 2020 targets for REACH. Discussions were stimulated by results of a survey of the metals sector and key members of its value chain. The conclusions of this survey are available [here](#).

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About Eurometaux

Eurometaux, the European non-ferrous metals association, represents the enterprises and organisations that make up the broad non-ferrous metals supply chain – from mining and refining to processing, fabrication and recycling. Europe’s non-ferrous metals industry represents 2% of EU GDP and creates 500,000 direct jobs and over 3 million indirect jobs in Europe.

Notes to editors

Eurometaux’s Chemicals Management Seminar, “A strategic reflection on Chemicals Management in a Globalising World”, was held in Brussels on 21-22 October. The metals sector felt it time to conduct a retrospective overview of their experience with REACH and International Chemicals Management, and to reflect proactively on future strategies towards 2020 challenges.

Photos from the Seminar are available [here](#).

On **21 October**, a comprehensive panel discussion was held between speakers from all levels of the REACH process, moderated by Guy Thiran, Eurometaux’s Director General:

- **The implementers** – Mr Geert Dancert, Executive Director, ECHA
- **The policy makers** – Mr Klaus Berend, Head of REACH Unit, European Commission DG Enterprise
- **The implementers** – Mr Hans Meijer, Coordinator Chemicals Management, Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment
- **The users** – Mr Alfons Westgeest, Executive Director, EUROBAT, the Association of European Automotive and Industrial Battery Manufacturers.
- **The stakeholders** – Mr Vito Buonsante, Health and Environment Lawyer, ClientEarth
- **The metals industry** – Mr Dirk Vandenbergh, CEO, Metallo-Chimique

On 22 October, besides industry speakers, the international perspective on chemicals management was presented by Bob Diderich, Head of Environment, Health and Safety Division Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

Participants discussed the steps that would be required to establish level playing field conditions for EU companies faced with implementing REACH, so that industry’s competitiveness could be enhanced hand in hand with improving chemicals management in the sector and its supply chain.

The four main conclusions were as follows:

1. Eurometaux’s proactive approach to the REACH process as a common voice for the European non-ferrous metals industry has been highly appreciated by policy makers in DG Enterprise and ECHA.
2. The implementation of REACH is an evolving process culminating in the 2020 target. The metal industry is committed to continue engaging proactively.
3. Companies agreed on the importance of including chemicals management in business quality management systems
4. There remain free-riders in the REACH process. The metals industry were encouraged to work on solutions to improve this situation, together with policy makers