

Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances Paper		ACTS/08/2006	
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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF ACTS WORKING GROUPS – ERMAG, SCHIP AND WEELS

A Paper by HSE's International Chemicals Unit

Cleared by Robin Foster on 18 April 2006

Issue

1. Annual report to ACTS members on the activities of three of its sub-groups – the European Risk Management Advisory Group (ERMAG), the Standing Committee on Hazard Information and Packaging (SCHIP) and the Working Group on European Exposure Limits (WEELS).

Timing

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. That ACTS note the activities of these sub-groups between April 05 and May 06.

Background

4. This paper covers the three sub-groups which are managed by International Chemicals Unit (DR 1), and which relate to areas of chemical control that are driven by the European Commission. The reports relate to the work year commencing April 2005.

Argument

a) The European Risk Management Advisory Group (ERMAG)

5. ERMAG (whose membership is listed in Annex 1) acts as a consultative forum for the development of the UK approach to negotiating on risk reduction strategies (RRS) as part of the European Union's Existing Substances Regulation (ESR) programme. ERMAG has advised HSE on the development of its negotiating strategy, on approaches to achieve the necessary balance between human health and

environmental concerns, as well as advising on the details of proposed RRS for specific substances.

6. The European Commission Working Group on ESR RRS has met three times (March, November 2005 and February 2006) since the last update to ACTS in March 2005. ERMAG members provided comments on a small number of RRS, but no meetings of ERMAG have been needed.
7. With political agreement now achieved for REACH and entry into force expected in April 2008. The ESR programme is in its last work year and we can begin the work on a review of ERMAG. We will explore the future role of the Group in the first two quarters of this year and will present our findings to ACTS for consideration.

b) The Standing Committee on Hazard Information and Packaging (SCHIP)

8. SCHIP advises HSE on the development of policy and the negotiating strategy in relation to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances and preparations. It identifies issues that need to be taken up at a higher level (e.g. with ACTS, HSC or Ministers), and helps HSE develop the domestic legal framework for implementing European Commission Directives dealing with these matters. Its current membership is listed in Annex 1.
9. SCHIP agreed in April 2004 to operate on a 'virtual' basis with Member's being kept up to date with developments on REACH and GHS. SCHIP's core work as a consultative forum is heavily influenced by the pace and nature of EU developments. With the entry into force of REACH now a year away, and the GHS regulation expected to follow, SCHIP Members have been alerted to the need for the continued involvement against this background of change. With traditional timescales for European legislative change expected to be squeezed in the run up to REACH and GHS, we have asked for Members' help in advising their respective networks of planned changes and in making the necessary preparations for anticipated ATPs to the Dangerous Substances and Dangerous Preparations Directives, respectively, and subsequent changes to the CHIP regulations.
10. We intend that SCHIP should be a focal point for interested parties to discuss forthcoming developments and advise HSE. This may include the need to consider texts rapidly, e.g. during periods of quickly moving EU negotiations on GHS. We are considering whether SCHIP's remit and membership needs to change to do this effectively. We have invited the views of SCHIP Members accordingly.
11. SCHIP also has three active sub groups. The subgroup on REACH was established as source of rapid response during the drafting of the European Commission's White Paper on Chemicals. Although this work has now been completed we have maintained the group as a source of advice during negotiations on REACH and will continue to do so.
12. The two sub groups on Classification and Labelling of general chemicals and Pesticides have met several times during the year to help prepare the UK positions on specific issues and substances to be discussed in Europe. We consider these

meetings to be particularly valuable in developing the UK position. Reports of both the panel meetings and the corresponding EU meetings are provided to SCHIP.

c) The Working Group on European Exposure Limits (WEELS)

13. WEELS provides a forum for discussion between HSE and UK industry and trade unions on the development of European Commission Indicative Occupational Exposure Limit Values (IOELVs) for hazardous substances. The current membership of WEELS is listed in Annex 1, and it includes one of the UK members of the EC's Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure limits (SCOEL).
14. WEELS did not meet during 2005. Delays in the adoption of the 2nd Directive on Indicative Occupational Exposure Limit Values (IOELVs) (the 2nd IOELV Directive), and a lack of progress in DG Employment on a 3rd such Directive meant that there no substantive issues to discuss. The 2nd IOELV Directive was agreed by Member States in October 2005 and adopted by the European Commission in February 2006. HSE is progressing domestic implementation.
15. A WEELS webpage on the HSE website serves as a repository for useful documents principally from the European Commission, e.g. SCOEL/SUM consultation documents, as well as papers and minutes from previous WEELS meetings.

Action

16. ACTS members are asked to note the information provided in this paper. We will continue to provide reports to ACTS on the work of these important sub groups.

Contact

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MEMBERSHIP OF ACTS SUB-GROUPS

1) ERMAG

Chair: Robin Foster (HSE)
Members: Dr I Carney (CBI)
Dr L Levy (Ind)
Ms S Murray (TUC)
Mr T Newbould (CBI)
Mr D Purchon (Ind)
Mr T Riley (CIA)

Officials also attend any meetings from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Environment Agency. In recent times business has been conducted by correspondence.

2) SCHIP

Chair:	Robin Foster (HSE)	
Members:	Mr D Beverley (TUC) Mr C White (Ind) Mr P Donnelly (CBI) Mr D Farrar (CBI) Mr B Hudspith (TUC) Mr N Berentzen (CBI) Mr I Thomson (Ind)	Associate Members Mr T Badcock Mr M Bernstein Mr T Bingham Mr P Cerins Mr P Cooper Mr G Hayward Mr T Newbould

Independent vacancy
TUC vacancy

3) WEELS

Chair: Robin Foster (HSE)
Members: Mr D Bloor (Ind)
Mr R Chapman (CBI)
Dr A Fletcher (TUC)
Mr M Haugseng (Ind)
Prof. A Hay (TUC)
Dr L Levy (Ind)
Ms S Murray (TUC)
Dr D Owen (CBI)
Dr R Pullin (CBI) (new appointment)

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Health are copy recipients of papers. In addition UK members of the DG Employment Working Party Chemical Policies in the Workplace receive papers and may attend meetings.

