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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 John Thompson on 1st March 2004

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 takes note of the recent activities of these sub-groups.

Background

4. At the July 2003 meeting of ACTS, members expressed some concern that they did not receive regular reports from all the ACTS sub-groups. The ACTS Secretariat agreed that an annual report from these sub-groups would henceforth be provided at the March ACTS meeting.
5. This paper covers the three sub-groups which are managed by CFPD6 (International Chemicals Unit), and which relate to areas of chemical control that are driven by the European Commission. The reports relate to the work year commencing April 2003.

Argument

- a) **The European Risk Management Advisory Group (ERMAG)**

6. This Group acts as a consultative forum for the development of the UK approach to negotiating on risk reduction strategies as part of the European Union's Existing Substances Regulation (ESR) package. In particular, it advises HSE on the development of its negotiating strategy, on approaches to achieve the necessary balance between human health and environmental concerns, and on the details of proposed risk reduction strategies for specific substances. Its current membership is listed in Annex 1.
7. The European Commission Working Group on ESR risk reduction strategies (RRS) met in April 2003 and again in January 2004. The main aim of these meetings was to finalise Official Journal entries for RRS for 12 ESR substances. These include two substances (acrylamide and 1,3 butadiene) for which the UK is rapporteur. The human health RRS for the 12 substances were discussed at ERMAG meetings in 2001 / 2 when the UK positions were developed. As a result it has not been necessary for ERMAG to meet formally in the past year.
8. During the year, we received several other Member State RRS for consideration. We consulted ERMAG by e-mail on these and received helpful comments. In addition, we have provided reports in order to keep ERMAG informed of progress at RRS Working Group and Competent Authority meetings. We have also provided updates from European technical meetings on ESR risk assessments.
9. HSE is continuing to develop RRS for a number of substances for which the UK is Rapporteur, including bis phenol A and chromates. We will consult ERMAG on these when we have produced draft RRS.
10. We believe that our current approach is appropriate in the context of current European ESR activity. However, the European Commission is developing proposals to address the transition from ESR to REACH. With these developments in mind, it is an appropriate time to review and consult ERMAG members on the future role of the Group. We will present our findings to ACTS for consideration.

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

11. SCHIP exists to advise 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 which need to be taken up at a higher level (e.g. with ACTS, HSC or Ministers), and helps HSE develop the UK legal framework for implementing European Commission Directives dealing with these matters. Its current membership is listed in Annex 1.
12. Since the last meeting in March 2003 there have been no issues which warrant consideration at a full meeting of SCHIP. Members have been kept informed of relevant developments through e-mail and also by information papers which are posted on a password protected web page; Annex 2 lists the subjects covered in the past year. If required we would be happy to provide ACTS with the password details so that specific papers may be viewed.
13. 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. This work has now been completed. However we have

maintained the group as a source of advice during the drafting of the REACH proposals. In June 2003 we held a meeting of the Group to consider issues arising from internet consultation on REACH; ACTS members were invited and we fed back to the September meeting.

14. The two sub groups on Classification and Labelling and Pesticides have met several times during the year in order to 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.
15. We believe it is timely to take stock of the role and organisation of SCHIP and its sub groups and for us to report back to ACTS with any proposals for change which may emerge. We plan to do this for the next ACTS meeting.

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

16. WEELS provides a forum for discussion between HSE, UK members of the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) and UK industry and Trade Unions on the development of Indicative Occupational Exposure Limit Values (IOELVs) for hazardous substances. The committee also includes three independent members. Its current membership is listed in Annex 1.
17. WEELS met twice during 2003 and is next due to meet in May 2004. During 2003, the Chairmanship of WEELS transferred from Carole Sullivan to Bob Warner, together with an internal transfer of responsibilities concerning the negotiation and development of occupational exposure limits.
18. At the February 2003 meeting, WEELS members discussed the current work programme of SCOEL, the European Commission's scientific committee made up from independent scientific experts nominated by Member States. SCOEL considers the toxicology of hazardous substances and makes recommendations to the Commission for the establishment of IOELVs. Of the two UK members of SCOEL, one also sits as an Independent member of WEELS, and the other, who is an HSE official, attends meetings on an ad hoc basis.
19. Members also heard feedback on the recent work of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work's Ad Hoc Group on Chemical Policies in the Workplace, and, in particular, on the negotiation of the 2nd IOELV Directive. Additional information was provided on the recent deliberations of the European Commission's National Experts Working Group which determines priorities for work on chemicals, for future referral to SCOEL.
20. The meeting considered two documents prepared by HSE. One was a Flow Chart developed to demonstrate the various stages which a substance passes through between its consideration as a hazard and the establishment of a national limit. This has since been further developed (see paragraph 18k). The second document, prepared by HSL, gave details of potential measurement methods for all the substances listed in the 2nd IOELV Directive, for which limits will need to be established within the UK system. WEELS members were highly appreciative of this work which is

available via the HSE website:

http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl_pdf/2002/hsl02-23.pdf

21. A paper was discussed which set out the differences between the concepts of “reasonable practicability” as understood in the UK and “technical feasibility” as understood by other Member States. This was seen as a useful aid to future negotiation of occupational exposure limits. It was agreed that this work should be further developed, possibly with a view to sharing the UK’s views with other EU Member States.
22. As a result of a reorganisation within HSE, and discussions in the ACTS Sub-Group on its Working Groups, at the October 2003 meeting members looked more broadly at the role and future work of WEELS. This included a consideration of a further refinement to the EU limit-setting flow chart, and a discussion on how HSE could best communicate with WEELS members. It was agreed to establish a dedicated website for members, along the lines of that previously developed for SCHIP, on which all documents of current interest could be placed for easy access. In January 2004, a revised EU limit-setting “roadmap” was circulated for final comment and agreement, and was additionally circulated for comment to ACTS members.
23. Members were also updated on developments with the 2nd IOELV Directive and were informed that the Directive was likely to be adopted by the end of 2003.
24. The next WEELS meeting is scheduled to take place in early May.

Action

25. ACTS members are asked to note the information provided in this paper, and to suggest future items of work for these sub-groups.

Contact

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MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-GROUPS

1) ERMAG

Chair: Bob Warner (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)

Meetings are also attended by officials from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Environment Agency.

2) SCHIP

Chair:	Bob Warner (HSE)	
Members:	Mr D Beverley (TUC)	Associate Members
	Mr M Burgin (Ind)	Mr T Badcock
	Ms J Connor (TUC)	Mr M Bernstein
	Mr P Donnelly (CBI)	Mr T Bingham
	Mr D Drury (TUC)	Mr P Cerins
	Mr D Farrar (CBI)	Mr P Cooper
	Mr P Handley (Ind)	Mr G Hayward
	Mr B Hudspith (TUC)	Mr T Newbould
	Ms J Lloyd (CBI)	Ms S Rogers
	Mr I Thomson (Ind)	Mr A Wall
	Mr R Young (CBI)	

Meetings are also attended by observers representing Test Houses, the Chemical Hazards Communication Society and other Government Departments.

3) WEELS

Chair: Bob Warner (HSE)
Members: Mr D Bloor (Ind)
Mr R Chapman (CBI)
Mr M Haugseng (Ind)
Prof. A Hay (TUC)
Dr L Levy (Ind)
Dr P Lewis (CBI)
Ms S Murray (TUC)
Dr D Owen (CBI)

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 Ad Hoc Group on Chemical Policies in the Workplace receive papers and may attend meetings.

**Standing Committee on Hazard Information and Packaging (SCHIP) Papers issued
in 2003**

- SCHIP/01/03 - NECS Update Feb03
- SCHIP/02/03 - Implementation of Article 17 of the Dangerous Preparations Directive
- SCHIP/03/03 - Consultation on proposed 29th Adaptation to Technical Progress (ATP) of the Dangerous Substances Directive (DSD) 67/548/EEC
- SCHIP/04/03 - CHIP 3 Errors and Corrections
- SCHIP/05/03 - Global Harmonisation of Classification and Labelling (GHS) - Progress Report
- SCHIP/06/03 - Export and Import of certain Dangerous Chemicals - Adoption of new EU Regulation
- SCHIP/07/03 - Future plans for SCHIP
- SCHIP/08/03 - Secretariat's Report to the SCHIP meeting of 12 February 2003
- SCHIP/09/03 - SCHIP report of CMR Working Group
- SCHIP/AG/01/2003 - Agenda of 12 February 2003 SCHIP meeting
- SCHIP/10/03 - Consultative SCHIP Classification and Labelling Panel - Agenda for meeting of 17 March 2003
- SCHIP/11/03 - Consultative SCHIP Classification and Labelling Panel - Follow up meeting of 17 March 2003
- SCHIP/12/03 - GHS Update and Forward Look
- SCHIP/13/03 - SCHIP Current Developments
- SCHIP/14/03 - Report of CMR Working Group meeting of 14th May 2003
- SCHIP/15/03 - Prioritisation of Classification and Labelling Activity
- SCHIP/16/2003 - Current Developments November 2003
- SCHIP/17/2003 - UK proposal for classification of Colchicine as a mutagen
- SCHIP/18/2003 - Classification and Labelling Panel - follow up actions for the 8th October 2003 meeting
- SCHIP/19/2003 - UK C&L priorities for EU proposals: Existing Substances
- SCHIP/20/2003 - Revised colchicine data sheet