

the colourist

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THE SOCIETY OF DYERS AND COLOURISTS

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Environmental Matters



Impact of REACH

In December 2006, the European Parliament gave the go-ahead to the launch of REACH – Europe's landmark chemicals safety law. The aims of REACH (registration, evaluation and authorisation of chemicals) are to improve the protection of human health and the environment while maintaining the competitiveness and enhancing the innovative capability of the EU chemicals industry. REACH breaks new ground by reversing the burden of proof, requiring industry to demonstrate that substances are acceptably safe.

In essence, REACH requires all chemicals of one tonne or more in volume that are manufactured in or imported into the European Union each year, to be registered with a new central European authority – the European Chemicals Agency. In addition REACH applies to all chemicals that are considered of very high concern to health or the environment – regardless of volume. In practice REACH will resonate further than the chemical producing industries; as materials suppliers decide how to meet the cost and bureaucracy of compliance all European manufacturing businesses will be affected. Businesses that buy their chemicals from suppliers outside the EU may find themselves having to undergo the REACH compliance process. Manufacturers, importers and downstream users of chemicals alike need to

be prepared and fully aware of the impact that this new legislation will have on their business.

Implementation

The law is due to come into force by June after eight years of debate and, whilst the chemicals industry supports the goals of REACH, its implementation will be all-consuming. Although it is agreed that the new regulations promise to bring about improvements in innovation and competitiveness in the EU chemicals industry, a more simple and ordered regulatory system, a reduced dependence on fossil fuels and cost savings in raw materials and lawsuits – there are still a number of concerns regarding the new



legislation as voiced by a number of organisations. The Royal Society of Chemistry has significant reservations about the scope, practical workability and some of the principles that REACH is based on, as well as the potential impact on chemical diversity. As quoted in a response to the latest development of this legislation, the RSC stated, 'There is concern that REACH could contribute to a reduction in chemical diversity which could in turn have an impact on innovation. It could also lead to useful chemicals being withdrawn unnecessarily due to the high cost of testing, rather than for health, safety or environmental reasons.'

Steve Elliot, chief executive of the Chemical Industries Association commented, 'There are many practical issues that need to be resolved and, as industry, we are committed to playing our part with the Commission, national governments and their regulators to ensure that we deliver a REACH that gives confidence and certainty to businesses and consumers alike.' The CIA has already set-up REACHReady – a subsidiary company established to help companies in every sector around the world comply with REACH. It is

the first fully formulated REACH service available to anyone and everyone needing help with REACH – whether a chemical manufacturer, importer, trader or a business that uses chemicals to produce its products.

There will be numerous other resources available to organisations as they begin to assess the impact of REACH on their businesses. With this in mind Rapra Technology has organised its first international conference on REACH aimed at addressing the key questions and misconceptions surrounding this legalisation. The conference, which will take place in Belgium on 17–19 April, boasts an expert speaker panel including organisations such as Degussa, Dow Corning and Ciba, as well as the RSC and the Centre for Process Innovation, who will describe the technical and management structures they have implemented to ensure compliance. There will also be workshops to help companies deal with some of the more in depth areas in a more informal and interactive setting.

Links: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/overview_en.htm, www.reachready.co.uk, www.rapra.net/conferences

Impact of colour industries

Over recent years, the traditional colour industry in Europe has seen displacement to Asia due to high labour costs as well as increasing production-related environmental costs in Europe. To investigate such problems as economics, lack of innovation, toxicity to the environment, etc. an EU-funded flagship project was set up October 2004 entitled 'SOPHIED' (Sustainable Bioprocesses for the European Colour Industries). With a projected timescale of four years and with 27 European partners, the main goals for the project include:

- the development of new bioremediation technology to detoxify coloured wastewater
- the development of new safe enzyme-assisted processes for the production of existing dyes
- the creation of new dyes which are less toxic and synthesised biotechnologically for high added value markets.

Considering that the dye industry is weak in research and development, it appears that new regulations such as REACH considerably limit possibilities for the development of new dyes. As well as the health implications of dyes there are also environmental issues to consider. During dyeing processing, between 10 to 40% of the dye remains unfixed to the substrate, therefore waters from dyeing processes need to be efficiently treated before their safe discharge. The aim of SOPHIED project is to reduce these implications.

The latest findings of the project will be covered at the next annual meeting, which will take place at the Questor Centre, Queens University Belfast on 4–6 June 2007. Anyone wishing to attend, or learn more about the project, should contact Celine Dubois at the project headquarters (c.dubois@wetlands.be) or Ciaran Prunty (c.prunty@qub.ac.uk).

Further information: www.sophied.net

Textile Futures

Interface between science and design

As consumers become increasingly aware about the eco-issues relating to the textile industry and its impact on a global scale, the impetus is for both scientists and designers to collaborate to develop new research relationships as they work towards reshaping the design, production and end-use of textiles. From textiles made of recycled waste, electronic circuitry to change the colour of your clothes, or materials that respond to their surroundings – progress into the future of our textiles will be rapid and varied. Dialogue between those who create and consume the future textiles, whether scientists, technologists, engineers, designers or makers, has begun. The future is here.

WHAT'S NEW?

–Lucy McRae, of Philips Design (Netherlands), is part of the 'SKIN probe' project team which looks at issues such as emotional sensing and explores technologies that are 'sensitive' rather than just 'intelligent'.



One product, the 'blushing dress' (pictured) responds to the wearer's emotions and projects them onto the textile. www.design.philips.com

–Grado Zero Espace (Italy) is a company



involved in innovative assembly processes to enhance the performances of the materials, with a capacity of re-elaborating traditional materials and giving new life to them, e.g. the manufacture of textiles from polyester production waste or the development of new materials from building production waste that have unique thermal properties. www.gzespace.com

–Maggie Orth, of International Fashion



Machines (USA), is a recognised innovator in electronic textiles and textile design. Recent projects she has pioneered

include proprietary colour change textiles and fuzzy sensors for lighting control. www.ifmachines.com

WHAT'S NEXT?

Amongst the numerous events held to engage consumers, highlight recent developments and assess the direction of research, it is clear both textiles and materials are the focus of attention.

The question 'What is the future for textiles?' will be asked at the first in a series of seminars and workshops organised by the Textile Futures Research Group. The remit of the group is to undertake a clearly focused range of textile-related research that facilitates improving the interface between science and design, the exploration of sustainability and the expansion of the textile product applications. The seminar, to be held on 20 March in London, will include presentations from fashion designer Katharine Hamnett (fashion designer), Martin Raymond (founder of Future Lab), Ian Ritchie (architect),

Sarah E Braddock Clarke (textiles author and curator) and Rachel Wingfield (interaction & textile designer). <http://mag.tfrg.org.uk>

Smart Fabrics will be a focus of attention at a conference to be held in Washington DC (USA) on 7–9 May. The event will be chaired by Stacey Burr (Textronics Inc.) and Dr Martijn Krans (Photonic Textiles Business Unit of Philips Research) and will cover the technical and commercial trends occurring in the smart fabrics/interactive textiles industry. www.intertechusa.com

Another question to be asked at a one-day



conference organised by the ASBCI will be 'Fast, affordable and sustainable fashion – can we really have it all?' The event, to be held on 17 May in Warwickshire (UK), will have sustainability and the environmental

as its key themes. Speakers include Julie King (De Montfort University), Krishan Hundal (Marks and Spencer), Colin McDowell, (*Sunday Times*' Style magazine), Richard Lawn (ColourMart) and Ian Bowles (Asda) amongst others. www.asbci.co.uk