

Role of Trade unions in REACH implementation

Tony Musu, ETUC
ECHA's Second Stakeholders' Day
Helsinki, May 27th 2009



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

- ETUC is the European social partner representing workers
 - The Maastricht Treaty (1992) guarantees this formal status
 - Together with the employers, ETUC is involved in consultation in areas such as employment, social affairs, macroeconomic, industrial and regional policy
-
- 82 National member organisations
 - 36 European countries
 - 12 European industry federations
 - 60 million workers



- Why trade unions work on REACH ?
- ETUC background on REACH
- ETUC involvement in ECHA
- How can trade unions help ?
 - REACH training material for workers' reps
 - Information campaign on pre-registration
 - Trade Union Priority List
- Conclusions



Why trade unions work on REACH ?

- 1.2 million workers in the EU chemical industry
- Millions of jobs in downstream sectors (building, textile, automotive, electronic, etc...)
- Chemicals contribute to the economic prosperity in terms of trade and jobs

But on the other side:

- 16 % of workers in Europe declare to handle hazardous products and 22 % to breath in toxic vapours (Dublin Fd, 2008)
- Around 30% of all occupational diseases recognised each year in EU are related to exposure to chemicals (ETUI, 2006)
- 74 000 work-related deaths per year in EU-27 due to exposure to hazardous substances (OSHA, 2009)



ETUC background on REACH

- ETUC WG on REACH created in 2003
- Trade union conferences on REACH (March 2005 & September 2006)
- ETUC impact study on the REACH benefits for workers' health (Sheffield University, 2005)
- ETUC involved in SPORT and PRODUCE
- Participation in various REACH Implementation Projects (RIPs)
- ETUC represented in REACH-CA meetings

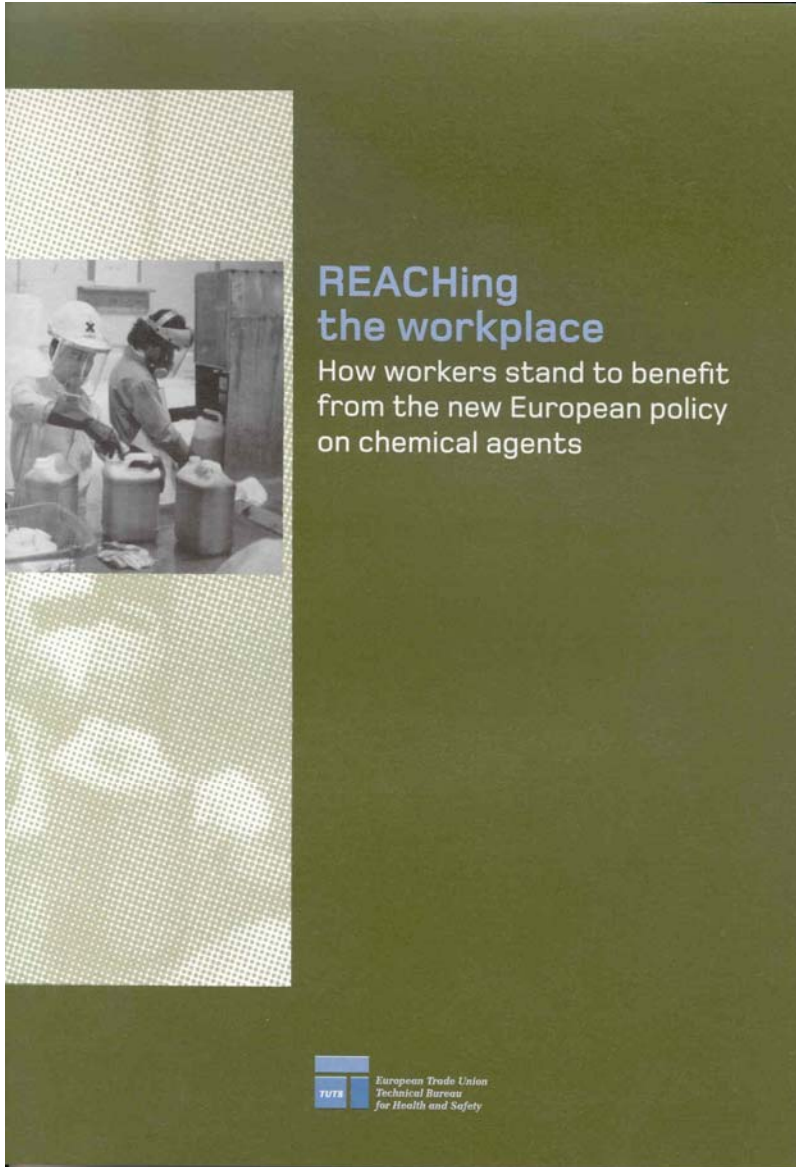


ETUC involvement in ECHA's work

- ETUC is appointed by COM to represent workers in the Management Board of ECHA
- ETUC has a permanent observer in all ECHA's Committees:
 - Member States Cttee
 - Risk Assessment Cttee
 - Socio-Economic Analysis Cttee
 - Forum
- Participation in Public consultation (authorisation procedures)
- Participation in guidance development (PEGs)
- ETUC represents workers in CARACAL meetings



REACH training material for workers' reps



The image shows the cover of a training material. It features a central photograph of two workers in a laboratory or industrial setting, wearing white protective suits and hard hats, handling large metal drums. The background of the cover is a dark olive green with a white halftone dot pattern. The title 'REACHing the workplace' is written in a light blue font, with 'REACHing' in a larger, bold font. Below the title, the subtitle 'How workers stand to benefit from the new European policy on chemical agents' is written in a smaller, white font. At the bottom left, there is a logo for 'TUTK' (European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety) consisting of a blue square with the letters 'TUTK' in white. At the bottom right, there is a red silhouette logo of four stylized human figures with their arms raised.

**REACHing
the workplace**

How workers stand to benefit
from the new European policy
on chemical agents

TUTK European Trade Union
Technical Bureau
for Health and Safety

Content:

- REACH, how does it work ?
- communication in the supply chain
- synergies between REACH & worker's protection legislation
- REACH & substitution principle
- hard copies and on line version available in 12 EU languages



ETUC campaign on Pre-registration

Why ?

- Many companies not aware of REACH entry into force and pre-registration advantages
- Many companies are not affiliated to an industry organisation but most of them have workers affiliated to a trade union

How ?

- ETUC sent an information pack to all its national member organisations (22 languages)
- Trade union representatives in companies were asked to inform their management about consequences of no pre-registration



Trade Union Priority List for REACH Authorisation

- Constructive contribution to the choice of SVHC
- 306 high production volume chemicals
 - widely used at the workplace
 - ranked according to their eco-toxicological properties
 - linked to EU recognized occupational diseases
- If they are included in the candidate and authorisation list:
 - workers will get better information on their uses
 - development of safer alternatives will be promoted
 - occupational diseases will be reduced
- The TU list is available on line: www.etuc.org/a/6023



Conclusions

- REACH implementation has started and real challenges are yet to come
- Trade unions are committed to make REACH reform a success (more jobs & improve workers' health)
- Trade unions are key players in REACH implementation
- Trade unions intend to play their role throughout the timetable for REACH implementation



Thank you, further info on:

<http://www.etuc.org> > Our activities > REACH

<http://hesa.etui.org> > Dossiers > Chemicals

