

European Trade Union Confederation reading on Sheffield study

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Why a further study on REACH ?

- Debate gives a too strong focus on costs
- Only one existing study on potential benefits for worker's health :RPA, 2003
- RPA benefits for worker's health come from avoidance of future cancer deaths
- But RPA study under-estimated occupational skin and respiratory cases because under-reported or under-recognised

Chemicals and Occupational diseases in Europe

- 16 % of workers in Europe declare to handle hazardous products and 22 % to breath in toxic vapours
- Between 18% and 30% of all occupational diseases recognised each year in EU are related to exposure to chemicals
- Skin and Respiratory disorders among the most common work-related problems (huge under-reporting)
- Occupational skin diseases are estimated to cost the EU € 600 million each year, resulting in around 3 million lost working days

Learnings from Sheffield study ?

- The study confirms occupational diseases caused by chemicals are a serious problem in EU countries
- Present situation in the EU-25:
 - Respiratory diseases : 180 000 new cases / year
 - Skin diseases: 80 000 new cases / year
- REACH has the potential to reduce them and the associated costs for both industry and society
- In the proposed scenario, potential benefits are linked to:
 - Data requirement and data transmission in supply chain
 - Implementation of the regulation

ETUC demands for optimizing the expected cost/benefit ratio of REACH:

- Extra information requirement for 1-10 t/year (chemical safety report + acute toxicity data)
- Better application of the Substitution principle (coherence with cancer worker protection legislation):
 - No authorisation if adequate alternative is available
 - All authorisations to be time-limited
 - List of substances subject to authorisation extended to strong sensitisers
- Mandatory compliance checking for min. nb of dossiers
- Duty of care principle

Report available on :

<http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/>