



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

PRESS RELEASE

“Polymer REACH” Project Assesses State-Of-The-Art Across Europe

A major European collaborative project focusing on the REACH legislation has identified a number of key factors which will provide fundamental help in steering the project going forward, for the benefit of polymer companies across Europe. Most importantly, the project has identified varying levels of awareness of REACH across the Member states, a severe lack of specific information about REACH relating to the polymer industries and also strong industry support for the forthcoming e-learning tool that will be the end-product from this collaborative project.

These findings have resulted from a “State of the Art” report which has been produced by the consortium, backed up by a detailed industry benchmarking survey. The State of the Art report provides a comprehensive listing of current sources of information about the REACH legislation, as well as contact details for national help-lines. The Benchmarking Survey, involving 135 detailed industry interviews, highlighted a lack of awareness or understanding of company responsibilities in over 20% of cases in countries including Italy, Portugal and Lithuania. Companies currently tend to search out information about REACH either from their national associations or else from nationally-based help-desks. Information on how to communicate with suppliers was most valuable to them, but

almost 80% of companies found difficulty in getting advice on who should be involved with REACH from within their companies.

The 2-year project, which started at the end of 2009, will be developing a readily-accessible e-learning tool over the coming 12 months. This objective was greatly welcomed by participating companies in the survey, particularly because the learning tool would be specific to polymers and also would be available easily and without the need to travel. They were also reassured by the reputations of the 8 collaborating organisations who make up the project consortium.

The project **WEBSITE** is now also up and running. Anyone is welcome to register free of charge on www.polymer-reach.eu. Copies of both the State of the Art report and also the Benchmarking Survey are freely available to download from the website and everyone who registers will be kept up to date as the project progresses over the next 18 months.

"Polymer REACH", is now 6 months into its 2-year programme, which will run until the end of 2011. The project is supported by funding of €0.5 million from the Leonardo "Lifelong Learning Programme", with a team of 8 European partners, led by Smithers Rapra Technology, working with other partners from the UK, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Lithuania and Estonia. The overall objective of "Polymer REACH" is to develop new content, an e-learning platform and supporting materials specifically for the European Polymer Industry, to help companies, particularly SMEs, to understand and increase their knowledge base on REACH. By facilitating the implementation of REACH, the project will help to bring about the planned-for environmental gains, whilst at the same time lessening the economic burden on companies.

The project consortium is...

Smithers Rapra Technology (UK)
British Plastics Federation (UK)
Rapra Limited (UK)
EuPC (Belgium)
Proplast (Italy)
CASO (Portugal)
APINI (Lithuania)
MTU Balti Keskkonnafoorum (Estonia)

Attached Illustration

The project team meeting recently at the offices of CASO (Consultores Associados de Organizacoes e Informatica Lda) in Braga, Portugal

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