

GREECE: HACI

In 2009, the Hellenic Association of Chemical Industries (HACI) took a decisive step to revitalize and upgrade Greek involvement in Responsible Care. The HACI Board allocated new resources and appointed a new Responsible Care coordinator to guide and manage a series of planned activities.

To reinforce this effort, we established a network of 15 focal points within the HACI membership to communicate these activities. The Board also gave the green light for our participation in the pan European pilot project "prisme²" (see p. 6) and held four successful capacity building workshops for SMEs between June 2009 and June 2010.

Among the subjects covered were Responsible Care reporting requirements according to the new ICCA guidelines; implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals; specialized training on safe use of solvents; safety and health protection in the workplace; plant and process safety, focusing on the risk assessment of fire and explosion hazards; and third party verification of Responsible Care.

Our participation in the prisme² effort has involved cooperation with a number of institutions including the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work, and the Greek state laboratory for GHS implementation, as well as the trade union representing workers in the chemical sector.

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The chemical industry in Greece

Turnover € 3 billion

Number of companies 320

Employees 20,000

HUNGARY: Mavesz

Together with its member companies, Mavesz continued to work to bring national chemicals legislation more in line with the rest of Europe, and to reduce bureaucracy. Much of our focus over the past two years has involved working with various government departments to remove overlapping national legislation covered at European level by REACH.

This effort is ongoing particularly on laws covering classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances, and risk assessment. Mavesz has submitted a detailed set of proposals to resolve these challenges; an important objective is to establish a unified Industrial Supervisory Authority covering all health, safety and environment related structures and activities.

We believe this will enable more effective regulation and result in an improved health, safety and sustainability performance of our member companies.

On other important issues for our industry such as emergency response Mavesz continues to work with authorities and further develop existing agreements. A good example is our agreement with the national directorate general for disaster management covering chemical safety since 2002.

Under this scheme, we work with experts on prevention of transport accidents, as well as emergency response procedures in the event of a transport accident. Similarly, we cooperate on issues under the Seveso directive and meet twice a year, together with member companies, to discuss requirements and how to fulfil them.

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The chemical industry in Hungary

Turnover € 7.8 billion

Number of companies 540

Employees 16,300

THE NETHERLANDS: VNCI

VNCI has been optimizing and renewing its Responsible Care programme since 2008, based on its commitment to the Responsible Care Global Charter. Each of our producing member companies signed up to the renewed programme.

As part of our efforts to advance towards external verification of Responsible Care, we replaced the old self assessment process with an online questionnaire. Through an extensive stakeholder dialogue undertaken in 2008, VNCI adopted a number of recommendations that led to a change of attitude and to forward looking statements reflected in the new format of the Dutch Responsible Care report.

Our sector wants to be assessed on its performance and on delivery against its targets. This means, for example, that targets we claim to meet or exceed must be verified. As a result of this commitment, we underwent the first external review of our Responsible Care report in 2009.

VNCI continues to work on recommendations put forward by the auditor, including those regarding specific qualitative and quantitative objectives of the chemical sector. It is our belief that performance data can only be communicated successfully once we have a clear picture of societal expectations.

Hence a new stakeholder dialogue was launched in 2009 to give us feedback on the new Responsible Care report. One recommendation, for example, was to ensure greater involvement on the part of business and sales personnel in Responsible Care rather than limiting it to HSE experts.

In 2009 the scope of our national Responsible Care Award competition was widened to include ideas and projects on a smaller scale than in previous years, a move that resulted in the highest number of entries ever. Our Awards film provided a model for Cefic to feature the winners of its own Europe-wide Awards scheme, and we lent our support for production of the Cefic film.

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The chemical industry in the Netherlands

Turnover € 50.08 billion

Number of companies 915

Employees 66,000