

# FormaCare

## Key Issues and Activities

*European Responsible Care Conference  
Zurich, 21 October 2010*

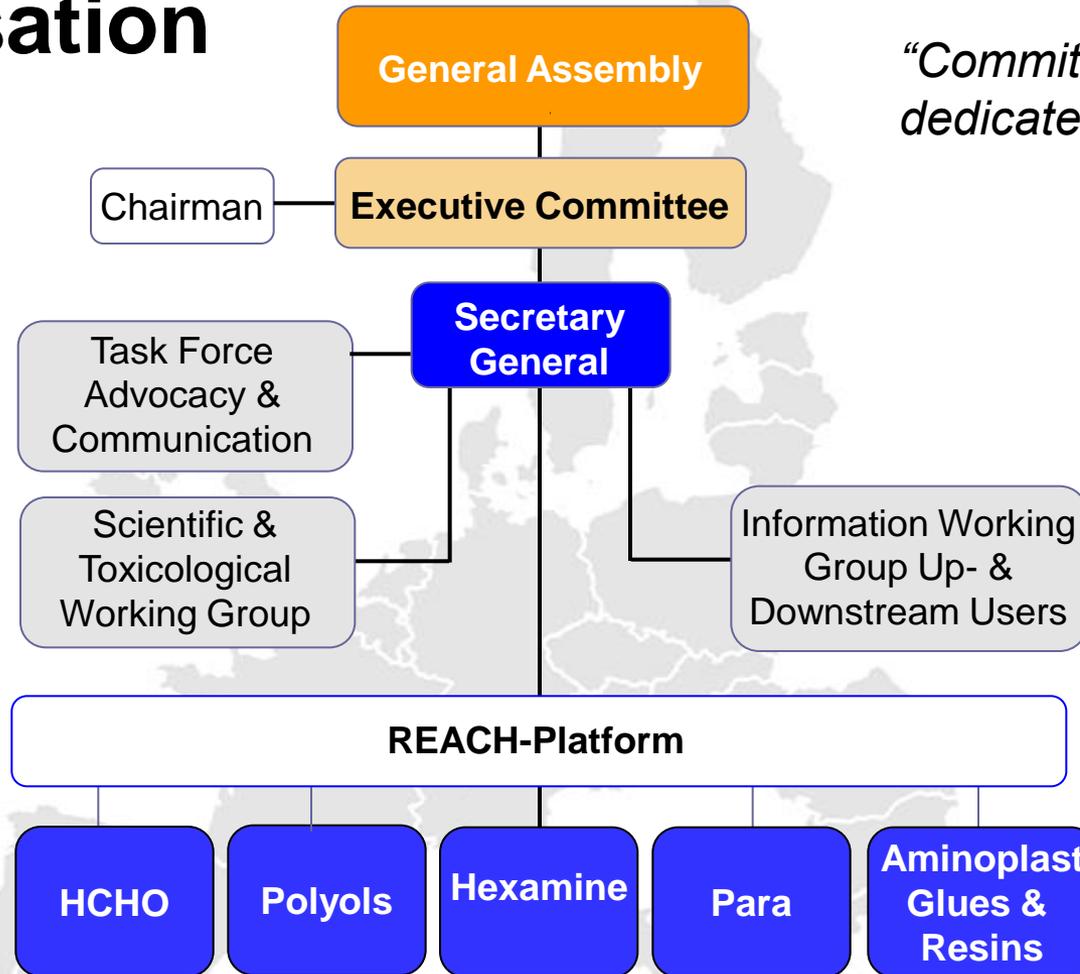
*George C M Gallacher, Vice Chairman*



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## Organisation



*“Committed to customers - dedicated to public health”*

# I. FormaCare – Profile and Members

## Examples



...many others  
(>30)



Almost **€330 billion** worth of sales resulted from this industry's activities.

Over **1.7 million** workers are employed directly in chemical processing and downstream fabrication facilities in the European Union and Norway (primarily in the wood products and furniture industries).

## II. FormaCare – Responsible Care

### FormaCare Responsible Care Key Principles

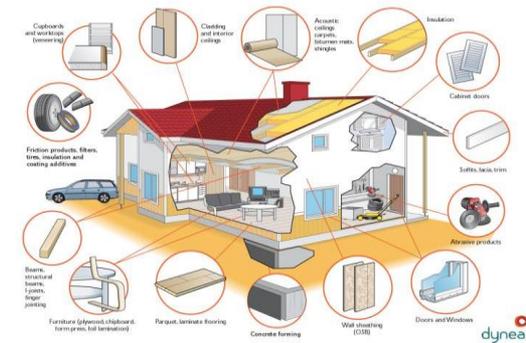
- ✓ **Our industry is very serious about understanding and mitigating any potential risk to human health and the environment.**
- ✓ **Our industry is committed to responsible manufacturing and use of our products and the safety of workers and consumers.**
- ✓ **Based on our fundamental commitment to safety we continue to invest a lot of time and effort into research that aims to reduce scientific uncertainties.**

### III. What is Formaldehyde?

- ✓ **Formaldehyde is one of the most thoroughly examined substances in existence. In fact, all living organisms -- including people -- produce and process formaldehyde.**
- ✓ **It occurs naturally in the air we breathe and exists in the human body in low, but measurable concentrations.**
- ✓ **It is produced and rapidly metabolised in all species as part of the normal metabolic process.**
- ✓ **It neither accumulates in the human body nor in the environment because it is always rapidly oxidised or biodegraded.**

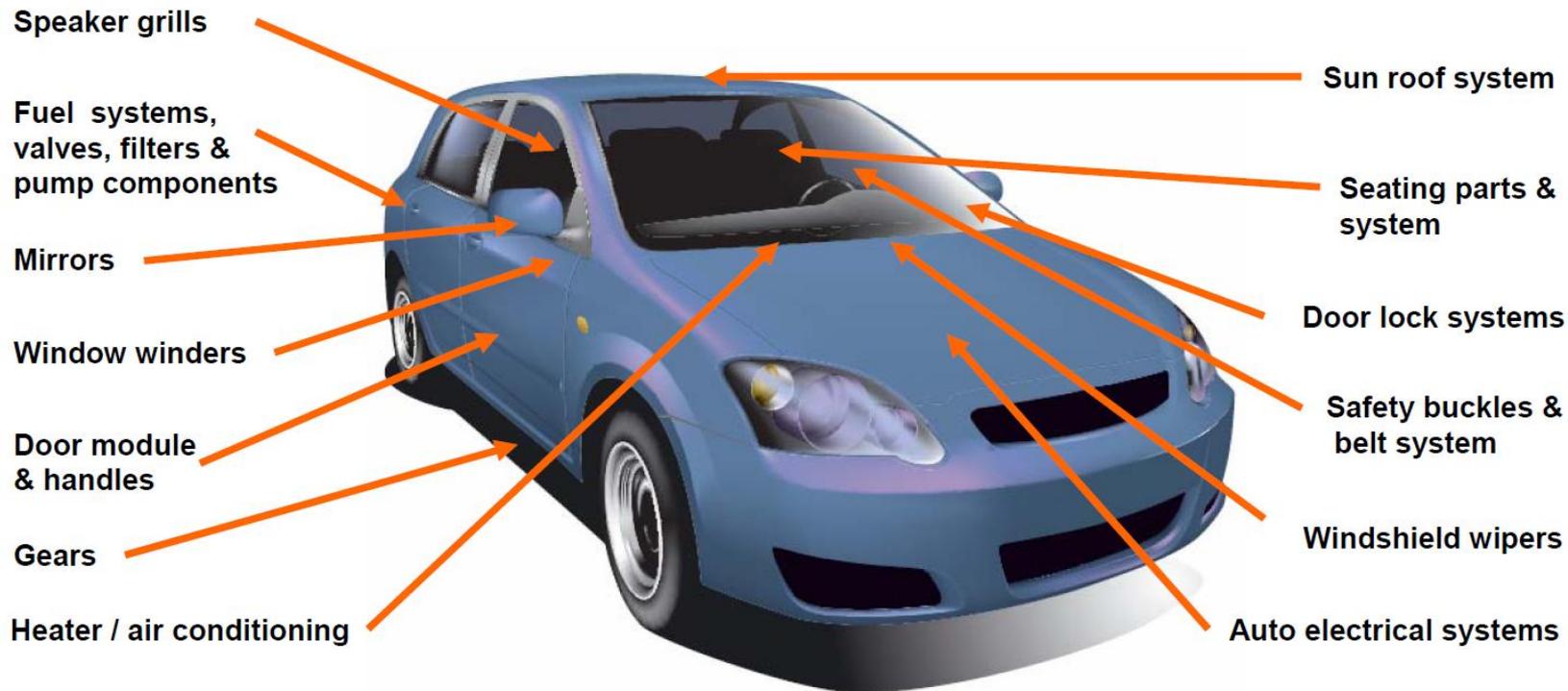
# IV. Formaldehyde: Occurrence and Uses

- ... is a **natural product** that occurs in the air that we breathe. In fact, all living organisms - including people - produce and process formaldehyde.
- It exists in the human body in low, but measurable concentrations.
- Formaldehyde is part of nature and as an **“everyday-life-commodity”** it works as key building block in major sectors of the economy: from **residential construction, aircraft and automobile industry** to health care applications – formaldehyde plays an important role to enhance the quality of numerous products of daily use.



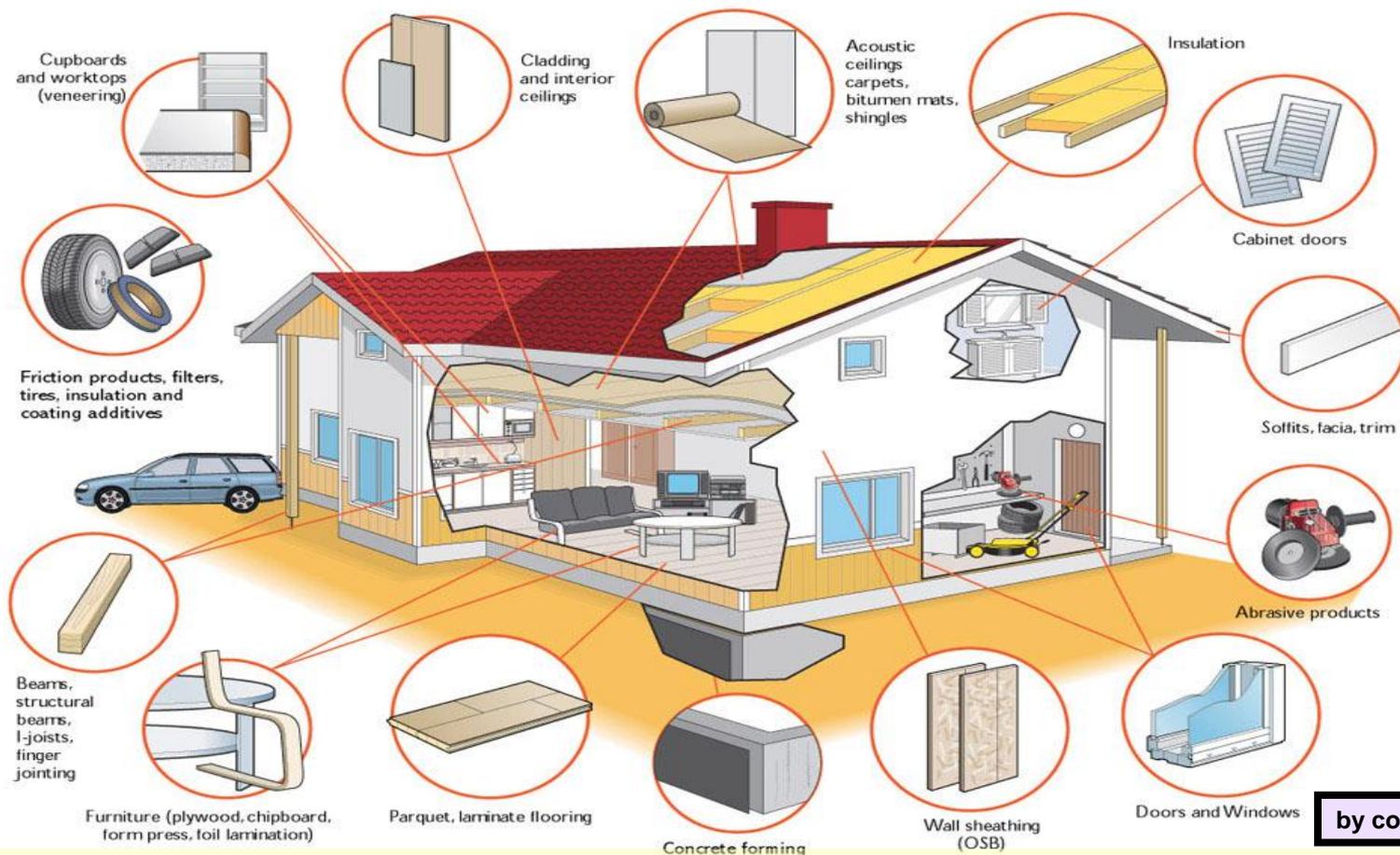
# IV. Formaldehyde: Occurrence and Uses

## Examples of the use of POM in cars



- Around 3000 different formaldehyde-derived thermo-plastic components are used in modern cars.
- To manufacture a car to current safety, quality and design standards without POM would therefore be practically impossible.

# IV. Formaldehyde: Occurrence and Uses



- Multiple applications in everyday use
- Formaldehyde is required for the production of furniture, stuffing for upholstery, household products, white fabrics, kitchen articles, paints and coatings, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, foam rubber, insulating and many other products.

## V. Safety Questions

- Over the last approx. 20 years, one question comes up regularly:

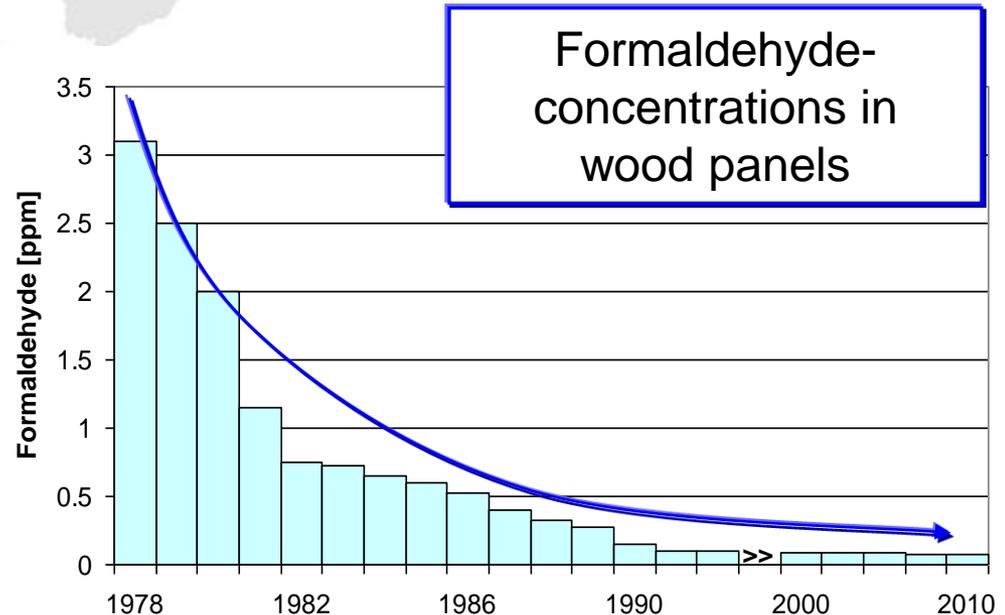
*Is formaldehyde a concern to the health of consumers and citizens?*

- France is currently working on a proposal to re-classify formaldehyde
- This proposal will be discussed in Europe (ECHA) from October 2010 to 2011/12.
- Since October 2009, based on a revised evaluation of formaldehyde by the “International Agency for Research on Cancer” (IARC), a new dimension is added to this question:

*Is there a correlation between formaldehyde and leukemia?*

## VI. Our Responsibility

- Our industry is very serious about risks to human health and has always invested into research that aims to reduce scientific uncertainties.
- Formaldehyde is one of the most thoroughly examined substances in existence.
- Industry has been acting responsibly, e.g. by reducing emissions levels from wood panels significantly over the years.
- Formaldehyde-concentrations in wood panels are nowadays approaching the range of those in natural wood.



## VII. Our Concern

- *Despite industry efforts to reduce emissions...*
- *Despite numerous scientific studies and independent scientific expertise, demonstrating no risk ...*

*.....restrictions on certain uses of formaldehyde could be the result of current regulatory trends in Europe.*

### **Our Position:**

**The common uses of formaldehyde in consumer products and other applications as well as at the workplace do not pose a risk to human health!**

# VIII. FormaCare – Best Practise Case

## “Company Best Practice Event”

- ✓ Three events were organised in three Member States of the EU, namely in Finland, Germany and Belgium
- ✓ Safety at the workplace: Inspection of chemical industry sites
- ✓ It was part of the “Social Partners Dialogue of the European Chemical Industry”
- ✓ Forum for an open and science-based exchange

### Case 5 FormaCare Safety at the Workplace, Responsible Care, Stakeholder Communication and Social Partner Dialogue

**FormaCare represents key European producers of formaldehyde, aminoplast resins and glues, polyols and other major up- and downstream users. FormaCare aims to promote the sustainable use of formaldehyde and formaldehyde based products among its members and their customers, with due regard to health and environmental care. Creating an open and effective dialogue based on sound science with all stakeholders is our understanding of responsible care and effective product stewardship.**

In order to measure up to this ambition and to substantiate our approach, a “Company Best Practice Event” was organised at the production sites of three member companies in Belgium, Germany and Finland in September 2008. The management of Sadipan, Kronspan and Dynas welcomed the initiative and were happy to offer their sites in Gerk, Langpertweide and Hammo to host the event. Furthermore, the European chemical workers federation was an active and important partner, which we demonstrated as well with this event.

**OPEN DOORS FOR OPEN DISCUSSION**  
With this voluntary initiative FormaCare actively contributed to increase broad societal awareness in demonstrating that our approach is science-based and responsible and showing how we can ensure the safe use of an important substance.

Making use of existing member companies’ infrastructure enabled us to provide an excellent forum for a broad discussion. We had made sure that interested groups received an invitation to participate in the event since it was our genuine interest to enhance the dialogue not only with regulators and political actors at EU-level but also with local groups. Therefore, in addition to decision-makers from Brussels, we invited employees and representatives of Work Councils, Trade Unions, local government, authorities, and citizens.

In order to underpin the essential importance FormaCare ascribes to the scientific dimension for all forms of stakeholder dialogue, toxicologists and other scientists were invited to participate actively in the event.

In this way we as industry could communicate our position based on sound science to the widest audience while at the same time receive their opinions and answer any questions that came up in the course of the event.

**WORKPLACE SAFETY: OUR DAY-TO-DAY OBJECTIVE**  
FormaCare member companies work to make sure that their plants run safe and workplace exposure control programmes are employed on a continuous basis. All data for each individual worker is recorded, which enables the companies to keep track of their employees’ exposure history for decades. For example through “Personal Air Samplers” effective air quality measurements are carried out in two complementary modes. Firstly, peak exposure is measured over a short period of 15 minutes and record, over a period of 8 hours. Long-term exposure can be quantified in the most accurate way. The results of these precise measurements are openly communicated to our employees and other stakeholders. Naturally, compliance to International Environmental Standards (e.g. ISO 14001, IPPC permits) also forms an integral part of our companies safety programme.

**ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY: WE GUARANTEE THE SAFE MANAGEMENT OF FORMALDEHYDE**  
We believe that our member companies must not only be aware of their responsibility. They must also assume responsibility for society, environment and – above all – for their most valuable assets: their employees. Guaranteeing workplace safety has therefore been the most powerful driving force behind our efforts to make a safe chemical even safer through multiple research programs and constant improvement of our production processes. Employees, occupational health & safety experts, the works council and the managerial level are equally involved in the development of an action plan for safe handling. At the Company Best Practice Event this key aspect was demonstrated to all stakeholders during a tour of the plant. The tour provided an insight into

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## IV. FormaCare – Current Scientific Questions

- ✓ **Currently, discussions on the safety of FA have resurfaced.**
- ✓ **Based on our Responsible Care principles, we take this current discussion very seriously and invest a lot of time and effort into research that aims to reduce scientific uncertainties even further.**
- ✓ **In line with its responsibilities for the safe use of formaldehyde, FormaCare continues to extend the overall available data-base to support the continued safety of formaldehyde products and industry.**

**One example from the past for applied Responsible Care principles:**

- **Science Conference in 2007**
- **European Commission as chair for main session**
- **Fully transparent scientific discussion**
- **Based on all independent expertise on FA epidemiology and toxicology**

# X. Questions welcome!?



*Thank you  
for your attention!*

**FormaCare**  
a sector group of  **cefic**