

Chemicals risk management projects at BEF addressing industry, trade and service providers

the main issues we tackle(d) and the main lessons learned

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About Baltic Environmental Forum

- Network of environmental NGOs in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany (and Russia 2005-2015)
 - founded 1995 as project, re-registered in 2003 as network of NGOs
 - Self-understanding as dialogue moderator and stakeholders' networker – NOT as environmental pressure group
- Goals:
 - To implement EU, global and national environmental policies,
 - To foster regional cooperation among key actors for the environment
 - To strengthen stakeholders' knowledge by training & experience exchange,
 - To raise environmental awareness of the societies and change behavior
 - To act as think tank for innovative and strategic environmental policy implementation
- Skills:
 - Wide environmental expertise, partly unique (chemicals risk management, cross-sector approaches, acceptance research), classical (water, waste, biodiversity) and innovative environmental issues (climate change, sustainable urban mobility, sustainable lifestyle and consumption)
 - Strong seminar performance: attractive programmes, active moderation, network of speakers throughout Europe and good logistics
 - Excellent project management and communications skills, especially in multi-country settings.



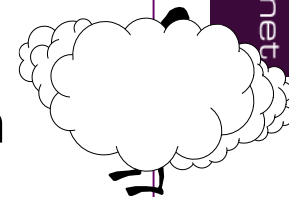
Chemicals Risk Management projects

- Started more than 20 years ago in Baltic States with introduction of EU chemicals legislation to competent authorities and work on implementation and enforcement, capacity building in CEECs
 - Important: view environmental, health and industry aspects (cross sector approach)
- Many projects supporting industry in Baltic States to understand and implement chemicals legislation
 - 20 years capacity building and training on basics and advanced understanding of the EU chemicals risk management framework, direct consultancy at companies, developed chemicals risk management tools and made them easy for Baltic circumstances, concrete substitution and substance use reduction case work at industry
- Chemicals risk management at municipality level – protecting health and environment in urban areas
 - The NonHazCity approach: strategic approach and concrete measures at municipalities
- Consumer protection and awareness raising leading to change of consumption pattern and market pull
 - Powerful public information campaigns including innovative communication and do it yourself tools, empowering citizens to express their concerns on chemicals in their daily life and proactively changing their consumption pattern



Our main learning: a lot of prejudice

- Chemicals and hazardous substance management seems to be a side issue among the environmental core topics
- The current discussion on climate change mitigation action seems to push it to the periphery of priorities
- The Chemicals issue follows its myth that it is complicated and one needs a PhD in chemistry to understand anything
- Chemicals risk management is believed to be about emissions of (large amounts of) hazardous substances into waste-water of the manufacturing industry (e.g. eliminating chromium III from leather production and substituting it with another substance).

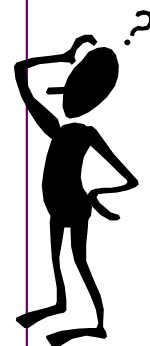


When REACH came in force in EU it was anticipated that chemicals risk management is successfully delegated to industry

Industry believed that they need to talk only to the ECHA

Lifting the veil

- Chemicals and hazardous substance is an important and very concrete environmental issue – priority in the “New Green Deal”
- Chemicals, Climate and Circularity issues are closely interlinked: many man-made materials & goods containing hazardous substances are made from mineral oils, many SVHC too
- Chemicals risk management is a communication issue to a very high extend – across all actors in the supply chain
- “Hazardous chemicals” are everywhere in our daily life – in very small quantities, but everywhere; they are invisible and mostly not declared in articles such as textiles, shoes, furniture, toys, decorative materials, flooring materials and many more
- Use and purchase of them is an issue to raise awareness of consumers on, but also of policy makers and of the manufacturing industry
- REACH implementation with regard to proper supply chain communication of industry has failed, Art 33 is poorly implemented
- Industry only slowly starts to notice that consumers want SVHC-free goods





Chemicals Risk Management at companies – a challenge

- Industrial processes are manifold and products manufactured are very diverse, it makes good advice difficult – and very individual
- We developed several tools for industry that can give some support to companies and want to give you some of our knowledge, however, there is no “one fit all” tool – you need to look at your specific case
- SVHC can be occurring in articles or chemicals products emit from them/expose humans to them, but also occur in production processes and be directly discharges to waste water
- They can also be used by down-stream companies as products or articles in their production, processes or services – and are often difficult to be identified
- Our learning: as farther a company is located from the begin of a supply chain, the production of a substance, as less he knows that he actually uses “chemicals” and as more difficult it is to get sufficient information



Our best tips and tools

- After 20 years work with companies we still pray the same: best start: a thorough chemicals inventory (!) of all what you use and produce
- A strategy of action is needed to reduce potential substances or products or articles which contain them by level of hazard – tools help to select
- Direct substitution is called “drop-in alternatives” (alternative substance for a substance of concern) but also technical or functional alternatives are possible and knowledge is available – but it costs some efforts and you might need external support
- Substitution is no mystery and there are many small measures with low costs and low efforts that can be undertaken easily – large scale investment causing change in your production lines might often be a last step
- And: as much as you depend on information on substances, products and articles, you need to be ready and active to provide the same about your goods and services! Be active in supply chain communication and answer consumer and retailer requests!



Costs and benefits of good chemicals risk management

- There are many prejudice about REACH costing industry a lot of money, but it is not possible to quantify it concretely
- In the coming years Green products will become more and more fashioned, also in Serbia – and, if you want to export: that's a must!
- At the end it is our all interest to have safe products and no harm from them to our children and the environment
- Definitely substitution of SVHC creates business opportunities for companies by improving their competitiveness, e.g. if they provide information on the absence of SVHCs or that they substituted SVHCs and succeed in marketing this (an ecolabel or an environmental management certificate might help in promoting it)
- Companies may also improve their supplier-customer relationships, build trust and establish communication routines, which may secure their sourcing and save (communication) costs.



Lets dive now into chemicals risk management

- We strongly believe that industry can manage it well although it is a challenge
- And that it is needed for our well-being as society

