



Workers' health and Chemicals

- 16 % of workers in Europe report handling dangerous substances and 22 % being exposed to fumes and vapours for at least a quarter of their working time¹.
- 7 million (5%) workers in the EU are exposed to chemical carcinogens at doses that can be considered beyond safety².
- There are around between 32 500 occupational cancer deaths related to chemicals every year³.
- Between 18 and 30 % of all occupational diseases recognised in EU are related to exposure to chemicals⁴.
- Occupational skin diseases are estimated to cost the EU €600 million each year, resulting in around 3 million lost working days⁵.
- The economic benefits of REACH for workers' health in the EU 25 would amount to €3.5 billion over 10 years. This represents the savings from future occupational diseases avoided by REACH, and about matches the total costs of implementing the regulation⁶.

1 Third survey on European working conditions, Dublin Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, 2000, <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/files/EF0121EN.pdf>

2 Occupational exposure to carcinogens in the EU 1990-1993, Carex, international database on occupational exposure to carcinogens http://www.ttl.fi/NR/rdonlyres/4444380F-B1FB-4D01-A974-0B6A9E663CFA/0/1_description_and_summary_of_results.pdf

3 RPA: Assessment of the Impact of the New Chemicals Policy on Occupational Health, March 2003, commissioned by the European Commission Environment Directorate-General, http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/pdf/finrep_occ_health.pdf

4 REACHing the workplace, TUTB 2004, 36 p Text available at <http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/uk/publications/pub33.htm>

5 European Agency for Safety and Health at work, facts 40, 2003. <http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications/factsheets/40/factsn40-en.pdf>

6 Further assessment of the impact of REACH on occupational health, University of Sheffield, 2005, Summary on <http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/uk/newsletter/files/NWSL-28-EN-sheffield.pdf>