

**WORKSHOP ON REACH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS (RIPs)
BRUSSELS, CHARLEMAGNE BUILDING – 25 SEPTEMBER 2006**

OPENING STATEMENT – J.P. MINGASSON

First of all let me thank the Commission for organising this workshop, which aims at informing a large range of stakeholders about the process, content and work progress of the REACH Implementation Projects, *the so called RIPs*.

REACH has often been described as one of the biggest and most complex pieces of EU legislation. And rightly so because REACH will affect nearly all substances needed for industrial activities.

Therefore REACH will not only require new responsibilities for chemical producers. REACH will also require new responsibilities for a whole range of companies including, importers, formulators, downstream users of substances or preparations.

Companies are prepared to contribute to the best possible extent to take up REACH challenges. To give you an example, industrial sector organisations are preparing themselves to support their companies through the set-up of helpdesks that will provide assistance for REACH implementation.

However, REACH cannot be achieved by companies only, authorities have even more to assume responsibilities to facilitate REACH implementation in an efficient manner.

In particular, authorities will have to devise ways to support those companies having limited resources to address REACH such as SMEs.

In order to facilitate the implementation of REACH, – *and coming now to the core subject of this workshop* – the Commission is developing technical guidance on REACH implementation and IT tools that aim at enabling industry and authorities to administer the legislation effectively from the start. This is done through a number of REACH Implementation Projects (RIPs) that are carried out in collaboration between the Commission services and stakeholders of REACH.

However, to ensure that the outcome of the RIPs ends up as an efficient tool, we believe that some clarifications are needed regarding their running and conclusions.

Industry would like to raise three particular concerns regarding these RIPs:

- Only a small number of industries are involved in running RIPs. It is nevertheless of utmost importance that a broader consultation of industry, and in particular downstream users, is organised at the time of the conclusions of these projects and for endorsing the final Technical Guidance Documents.
- To facilitate REACH implementation, these preparatory tools would need to be carried out and finalised well before the REACH implementation deadline, in order to ensure that all necessary support structures are fully operational. However it seems that some RIPs will not be finalised at the time REACH is supposed to enter into force. So what ?
- It should be made sure that the Technical Guidances will be short and simple to fulfil their objective of facilitating REACH implementation, which is not the case for some drafts.

In the interest of all stakeholders, we hope that these concerns will be properly addressed in the coming weeks. I hope that this workshop will help clarify stakeholders' questions and devise appropriate solutions.
