

Health and Safety Aspects

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Evolution of the European Chemical Industry

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European Trade Union Confederation:

ETUC is the European social partner representing workers

The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) guarantees this formal status

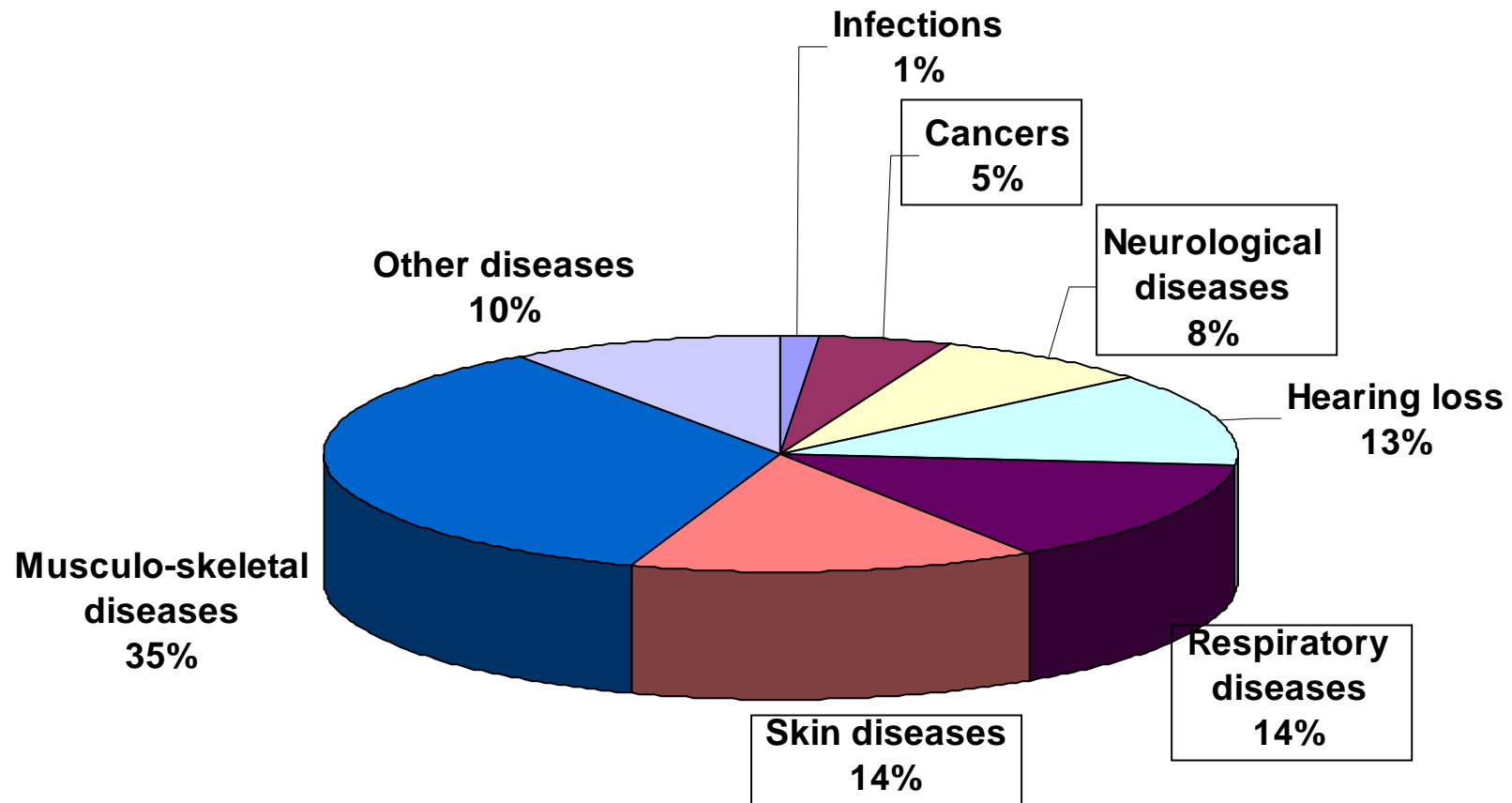
Together with the employers, it is involved in consultation in areas such as employment, social affairs, macroeconomic, industrial and regional policy.

- 81 member organisations
- 36 European countries
- 12 industry federations
- 60 million workers

Chemicals and Occupational diseases/fatalities in Europe

- 18 % of workers in EU-25 declare to handle hazardous substances and 20,5 % to breath in toxic vapours (Dublin Foundation, 2006)
- In 2001, more than 26 000 deaths of EU-15 workers due to exposure to hazardous chemicals (ILO, 2005)
- One out of every three occupational diseases recognised each year in EU-15 are related to exposure to chemicals (based on Eurostat data, 2004)

Recognised Occupational diseases in Europe in 2001



Source: EODS Eurostat, 2004

How many are chemicals-related ?

Occupational diseases	% linked to chemicals exposure	% amongst all recognised diseases	% chemicals related amongst all recg. diseases
Cancers	4 – 90* %	5 %	0.2 - 4.5* %
Neurological diseases	2 %	8 %	0.2 %
Respiratory diseases	36 – 89* %	14 %	5.0 – 12.5* %
Skin diseases	88 %	14 %	12.3 %
Total			~ 18% to 30* %

(*): including chemical dust

Source: extrapolated from EODS Eurostat, 2004

REACH = Registration, Evaluation & Authorisation of Chemicals



REACH, how will it work ?

- **Registration:** Manufacturers of chemicals > 1 tpa will be required to register their substances to demonstrate they can be used safely
- **Evaluation** of some substances by Member States / Chemical Agency
- **Authorisation** only for substances of very high concern

Results of the Sheffield Study on REACH benefits for worker's health

For EU-25:

- Respiratory diseases: 50 000 cases/year avoided
- Skin diseases : 40 000 cases/year avoided
- € 3.5 billion benefits over 10 years
- € 90 billion benefits over 30 years

Where do the benefits come from ?

- Savings for social security
 - Quality of life gains for workers
 - Productivity gains for industry (absenteeism avoided)
- ➔ REACH is clearly an opportunity to reduce the number of chemical-related occupational diseases and the associated costs for both industry and society

Conclusions:

- Hazardous chemicals among the major causes of occupational diseases and fatalities in Europe
- The recently adopted REACH regulation should help improve the situation
- Other measures needed:
 - Increase workers representation in companies (SMEs)
 - Intensify social dialogue at national and EU level
 - Training for workers & employers about chemical risks
 - Increase checks on compliance with legislation

Thank you, further info on:

<http://www.etuc.org> > Our activities > REACH

<http://hesa.etui-rehs.org> > Dossiers > Chemicals