



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

REACH-ing Industry – The New European Chemical Legislation

Friday, 28th November 2008

Dr. Vanni Xuereb, Head, MEUSAC

On behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information, Dr. Chris Said, I would like to thank you all for participating in this event organised by the Malta Standards' Authority and the Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee (MEUSAC) on the new European Community Regulation on chemicals and their safe use (REACH). Unfortunately, Dr. Said could not be with us this afternoon due to other commitments. I myself apologise for not having been here from the beginning, however, we hold the meeting of the MEUSAC Core Group every last Friday of the month, today being no exception.

MEUSAC was re-activated by the Government last May to act as an instrument as well as a catalyst for wider consultation tied in to the continued dissemination of information relating to EU policy and funding. Moreover, we have only recently also set up a Funding Unit that will provide local councils and non-governmental organisations with assistance in relation to tapping EU funds. Consultation, Information and Funding are the three main functions and priorities of MEUSAC.

It was, therefore, with immense pleasure that I accepted the invitation by MSA for MEUSAC to be associated with the Authority in this event. Clearly, the MSA is one of our privileged partners both in terms of the consultation process and also in terms of the dissemination of information.



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Following the establishment of the MEUSAC Core Group last August, a forum that brings together representatives of Government, the political parties, the Social Partners, the Gozo business community, experts and NGOs under the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Secretary for Public Dialogue and Information, we are now in the process of establishing nine sectoral committees that will bring together NGOs that will be grouped under these nine sectors:

- General Affairs,
- Economic and Financial Affairs,
- Justice and Home Affairs,
- Employment, Social Policy and Health,
- Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs,
- Transport, Telecommunication and Energy,
- Agriculture and Fisheries,
- Environment,
- Education, Youth and Culture.

On November 25th, MEUSAC issued an invitation for those NGOs interested in forming part of the consultation process to express their interest in participating in the sectoral committees. We hope to conclude the evaluation procedures by the end of the year in order to have these committees up and running by the start of the New Year. Some of you may recall the pre-accession MEUSAC process that led to a wide convergence within civil society on the final package for Malta's accession to the EU. Now that we are in our fifth year of membership, it is important that not only are we aware of the new legislation emanating from the EU institutions, but that we also participate in its formulation. The MEUSAC structures seek to address this by providing a mechanism by which the Government can consult with civil society before it adopts its position in the EU Council on draft EU legislation.



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You have spent the entire morning and this first part of the afternoon listening to the accomplishments of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) as well as on the way Maltese industry is adapting to meet the requirements of REACH. The experiences of our colleagues from Austria, Germany and the ECHA must have been of immense help to all of you in understanding even more the importance of the new Chemical legislation which is itself the result of extensive dialogue by the Commission with stakeholders.

May I, therefore, on behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Chris Said, thank MSA for this opportunity as well as all those who contributed in any way in making this event possible. A particular word of thanks goes to the guest speakers. Finally, a word of thanks to all participants.