

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIAN EXCHANGE FORMAT FOR PRODUCTS IN ITALY

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The Italian government has enacted article 10 of the European Directive 88/379 (now updated with Dir. 1999/45/EC) on Dangerous Preparations, appointing a central body charged to collect information about all dangerous preparations present on the Italian market. A specific Decree was published in the year 2000 (19/4/2000) in which all the details of the project were reported. The National Institute of Health (ISS) was appointed as the central body responsible for the programme and a fully computerised system was developed. A specific central database was defined together with client software, which was made available via the Internet web site of the ISS, together with other complementary files (user instruction, etc.). The aim of the project is to create a central database containing a limited amount of information on the dangerous preparations present in the Italian market, with particular reference to the full chemical composition. Dangerous components have to be reported by chemical name and CAS number while non-dangerous components can be reported using a chemical family name. The companies responsible for putting a preparation on the Italian market (including companies located abroad) are requested to download the programme (written in Oracle language) from the ISS website, install it in their PC and fill electronic forms for all dangerous preparations actually put on the Italian market. At the end of the process the program can generate a compressed file which may be forwarded to the central database. The Italian Ministry of Health makes this database available via on-line connection 24 h/day to all authorised PCs. Other countries have developed their own product Registers, either in response to the EU Directive on Dangerous Preparations, or for other national purposes. Several EFTAC countries have previously developed internal product registers, where a variety of different information on Dangerous Preparation is collected: in addition to the full chemical composition they often collect information on dangerous preparations or on individual dangerous components. Often information contained in the MSDS is also centralized. France has partly applied the Dangerous Preparations Directive collecting information at a central level (ORFILA, under the sponsorship of INRS) on the preparations belonging to the most dangerous categories (very toxic, toxic, corrosive) while for the other categories industry is requested to keep information available upon request. Germany has developed different projects for different purposes for different categories of products at local level. Recently they have also produced specific projects (e.g. TDI) and are developing their own data entry screen (DES) for specific category of products.

Similar approaches have been developed or are about to be developed in other countries (e.g. Spain and UK), but the general problem is that all these national systems are not compatible with each other having been developed on the basis of different legislative frameworks and for different purposes. It is now time to start an European project with the aim of developing an harmonized system finding a common format of the information, so as to be exchanged between member states and made available to all European PCs. The final goal could be to request industry to provide a minimum set of data to one Member State and granting the access of data via a European network to all National Authorities and PCs.