

DOW - RESPONSIBLE CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

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Allow me to give a brief description of the Responsible Care for the Environment program, which has been adopted by the chemical industry in the developed countries, and to mention at what stage of its implementation the Greek industry has arrived.

Responsible Care is the name of a program which is implemented voluntarily, with initiatives from the chemical industry internationally, within the framework of its contribution to the protection of the environment. This program takes the form of self-commitment and self-scrutiny. It started as an idea in the chemical industry in Canada in 1984.

The Responsible Care program consists of a series of guidelines and codes of management practice which analyze in detail, from the environmental point of view, every stage in the product life cycle. Specifically: Design of a new product; development; production; transportation; sale; use by customer; availability.

The six codes of management practice analyze the above stages of the product life cycle from different aspects:

- informing the public of, and dealing with, unforeseen incidents
- safety during production process
- product distribution
- sanitation, health and safety of production staff
- prevention of pollution
- product stewardship

Within the framework of Responsible Care, an industry which endorses it is committed to continuous improvement in all these areas. The improvement procedures call on the active participation not only of personnel from every department; production, laboratory, warehouse, sales, customer services, distribution etc., but also suppliers, distributors, customers and transporters. The procedure begins with self-scrutiny and self-audit in all the areas of the code. Then the points which need improvement are determined. Priorities, improvement targets and target dates are set. These, it must be stressed, are in most cases much stricter than those determined by the legislation of the country where the industry is established. Apart from the positive results for environmental protection, an important by-product of this procedure is the establishment of a strong environmental culture within the company environment. In Dow not only internationally but also in Greece, the environment, health and safety of personnel are extremely strong elements in the company culture.

The principle of Responsible Care is implemented at country level and more specifically, in the countries of the European Union. At the European level, the Federation of Chemical Industries of each country is assigned with monitoring the implementation of the whole program by their member industries. They report the results to the European Council of Chemical Industries, based in Brussels, which is the highest body of the chemical industry in Europe and is responsible for the general coordination, development and implementation of Responsible Care in Europe.

Until now the program has been implemented in Greece at company level by those companies which have already fully endorsed the principles of Responsible Care, such as Dow. At country level, a few well-intended efforts have already been initiated by companies which have established the Greek Secretariat for Chemical Industries. This Secretariat, of which I have the honor to be president, has already processed two of the Responsible Care codes, more specifically, those concerned with the health and safety of personnel and the storage and transportation of chemical products. It has distributed these codes among members as a first step toward their initiation into Responsible Care. At the same time the Secretariat has helped the authorities, especially the fire brigade, with technical information designed to deal with emergency incidents.

Despite all this, the Greek Secretariat for Chemical Industries has not yet managed to assist the whole of the Greek chemical industry. For this reason, Greece continues to be the only country in the European Union which is not officially represented at the European Council of

Chemical Industries level. At this time efforts are being made to establish a Federation of Greek Chemical Industries which will take under its wing the bulk of the chemical industry in Greece, with the goal of becoming a full member of the European Council of Chemical Industries in the shortest time possible. As soon as this goal has been achieved, it is hoped by June 1994, the Association will immediately begin coordinating with the European Council of Chemical Industries so that Responsible Care for the Environment will spread throughout the whole of the chemical industry in Greece.

Dr. **Costas Masmanidis** was born in Thessaloniki and obtained his Chemistry degree from the Aristotelion University in 1969. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Cincinnati University (1969-1974) while working under the supervision of Professor Hans Jaffe. He has also been a post-doctorate researcher in one of NASA's programs in the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1974-1975). Dr. Masmanidis has held various marketing executive positions in Dow, in Greece, Bulgaria, the United States and Switzerland, and, since September 1992, he has been the General Manager and Managing Director of Dow Hellas S.A.