

NONS-project (Notification Of New Substances, 1995-1996)

Summary

In order to prevent companies placing new substances on the market without reliable information on their dangerous properties the European Union adopted in 1967 the Dangerous Substances Directive and improved this in 1992 (Directive 92/32/EEC on classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances), introducing a harmonised notification procedure.

In practice, there appeared to be substantial differences in the way the directive is enforced in member states. Therefore, an European enforcement project on the notification of new substances (NONS) was carried out, starting in January 1995 and ending in June 1996.

In this project the dyestuff sector of industry was concentrated upon because it is very innovative in developing new chemical substances and it is well known that certain groups of dyestuffs have hazardous properties.

Nearly 4 000 substances were checked at 96 companies. Almost 8% could not be identified or were found to be new and about 40% of the new substances not notified and thus illegally marketed.

Of the 66 samples taken within the framework of NONS project, 29 are analyzed. 31% of the analyzed products do not conform with the information provided by the company.

It was found out that 45 of the 96 companies (47%) were thought by the controlling authorities not to be working according to directive (marketing not notified substances, no or insufficient labelling and safety data sheets, no or insufficient registration and internal control). Follow up actions after the company inspections consisted of sending hundreds of letters to the inspected companies, mainly concerning requests to provide information on the chemical identity of checked substances, requests to improve labelling and safety data sheets and offering advices.

As a result of the follow up actions, the number of substances that could not be identified, decreased from 644 (directly after the company inspection) to 163.

In 14 cases, the import or production of new, not notified dyes (11) or not identified dyes (3) was prohibited.