

Press Release

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Chemical Industry Federation of Finland

Record investment in environment and safety by Finnish chemical industry in 2006

Capital spending on environment, health and safety by the Finnish chemical industry reached record figures in 2006. The sector invested a total of some EUR 86 million in improvement of environment, health and safety issues, an amount equal to more than 14 per cent of fixed investment by the sector and a rise of more than one fifth compared with 2005. The results appear in the annual report on the Responsible Care programme, which is published on the website www.chemind.fi.

Input into environmental, health and safety work by the chemical industry has increased considerably over the years. The development has been monitored since 1988, with the investment reaching a record high in 2006. The previous time the EUR 80-million limit was approached was in 2002.

The prominence of the environmental, health and safety work in the sector is also shown by the increased operating costs, which in 2006 totalled EUR 108.2 million. Finnish industry overall spends about EUR 450 million annually on the operating costs of environmental protection. Expenditure by the chemical industry is the second-highest immediately after the forest industry.

The environmental, health and safety work has produced significant results. The greatest improvements were achieved in the early 1990s. Recent years have reached the level where progress is being made in small steps but in a better direction all the time.

The report states that water discharges with eutrophication potential have been reduced by almost 50 per cent since 1988 and water discharges of potentially ecotoxic substances by almost 90 per cent. The trend has been similar for atmospheric emissions. Acidifying emissions have fallen by more than 80 per cent since the 1988. For volatile organic compounds (VOC) the figure has been more than 70 per cent. The above-mentioned results have been calculated in the form of indexes proportioned to production. Greenhouse gas emissions have also been monitored by the sector since 1999.

In recent years particular attention has been paid to developing occupational safety. The lost time injury frequency rate has been brought down by about 70 per cent during the monitoring period, which began in 1988. In 2006 the results, unfortunately, have not followed this good trend; lost time injury frequency rate increased by 17 per cent compared with the previous year. The aim in the chemical industry is accident-free workplaces i.e. zero accidents.

The progress of the environmental, health and safety work is monitored and reported every year as part of the chemical industry's international Responsible Care programme, to which 105 companies in various areas of the chemical industry in Finland are committed. These companies employ more than 19,000 people. The report with information for 2006 was published on April 18, 2007. The information covers more than 80 per cent of the output by the chemical industry in Finland.

Further information is available from:

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More detailed information about the results of the programme can be found on the website www.chemind.fi/home under the heading Facts and Figures.