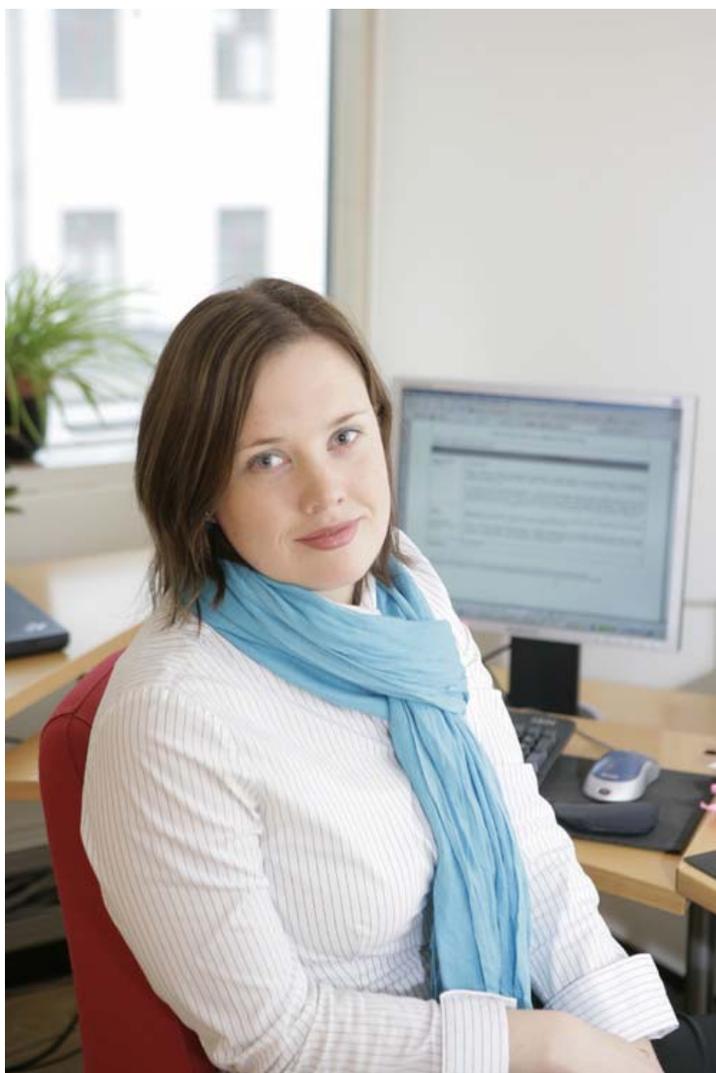


REACH *Case story*

An association battles for its Members



Eeva-Mari Karine, TY REACH coordinator

The Finnish Cosmetics, Toiletry and Detergent Association (TY) has 55 members in Finland. Almost all are small businesses, although some are larger companies. The majority of members are importers, while a few are manufacturers. The Association's secretariat has a staff of just three.

TY began discussing the potential implications of REACH in internal meetings, especially of its technical committees, as early as upon the publication of the first draft of the REACH regulation. The minutes of these sessions were circulated to members giving them early warning of the implications of the future legislation.

The Association worked closely with the Finnish chemical industry and other organisations such as the Brussels-based European Cosmetic Toiletry and Perfumery Association (COLIPA) and the International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products (A.I.S.E.). The Finnish Chemical Industry

has been a highly useful supplier of basic information. Because of the specific nature of the Association's members, not all of this was directly relevant. However, the information received from European branch organisations has proved to be very valuable.

TY staff attended several seminars on REACH involving the chemical industry and were in contact with company experts who were knowledgeable about the issues and would be implementing the requirements in practice.

The Association has been tailoring the information it receives from larger organisations to suit the specific needs of its members in what is a highly diverse industry. As Eeva-Mari Karine, the coordinator explains: "We receive the information and decide how to deliver it to our members. COLIPA and A.I.S.E. send us fact sheets and newsletters and we assess and decide what to translate or modify and send out."

Last summer, TY prepared two sets of guidelines for members - one on cosmetics, the other on detergents – describing how REACH would impact on each sector. Most of the companies are downstream users and have to calculate the quantity of everything they use – a difficult task given that there may be many substances in one detergent.

TY has a regular newsletter for members. Over the past four years almost every issue has included the latest relevant information on REACH. The Association does not have a website about REACH, but by May it aims to operate an intranet that will enable all members to communicate information, such as details about REACH, immediately. Companies are also encouraged to contact the TY secretariat if they have specific queries.

The Association has organised seminars on the future legislation, bringing in speakers with the relevant regulatory background at both national and European level. Although many of the members are subsidiaries of international companies and receive information from their head offices, Ms Karine emphasises the importance of the local environment and understanding how the new measures will be implemented in Finland.

"There is a problem for companies that are not in an association. They could be about 10% of firms, most of them small, in the detergent sector. They do not necessarily know about REACH and what they will have to do. In Finland, we would need a strong information campaign to get the message across to people who are not yet aware of the potential problems," says Ms Karine.