

Dr. Richard L. Rogers, INBUREX GmbH, Hamm

A new EU funded Thematic Network “SAFETY TO SAFETY (S2S) – A Gateway to Process Safety” is established

The countries of the European Union have a strong tradition of improving safety in the process industries. This improvement has come about, on the one hand, by research and technological development that has increased understanding of the reasons for failures in process plants and provided methods for either preventing or minimising consequences of failures. On the other hand, by improvements in the way in which operations are controlled through advances in management systems, auditing and the understanding of human factors. Major programmes supported by the EU and national research projects have aided this progress. Member organisations from throughout Europe, including research centres, universities, product or technology developers, policy makers and regulatory authorities, have been involved in some 200 research projects.

Important aspects for a network are the exchange between professionals, the identification of research needs, the transfer of research results and new information to the process industries and the end-users. Several EU funded Thematic Networks have in the past been set up to aid this exchange, identification and transfer of information and have involved and still involve many organisations.

Members of the existing networks SafetyNet, Harsnet and PRISM have proposed to the EU a new network SAFETY TO SAFETY (S2S), designed to develop improved coordination between the people involved in or concerned by process safety. The aims of S2S are to combine the knowledge available in the present networks and to establish a reference point where the most up to date knowledge, practices, standards and legislation in the field will be documented and an educational tool where interactive training will be available through www-based safety assessment tools and tutorials.

The S2S Network came into existence in October 2002, and the actual work started with a well visited kick-off meeting at Risø National Laboratory, Denmark in December 2002. The work is now proceeding on the various tasks that were agreed with the EU. These tasks include interviews to map the present research and technological developments in process safety including the “missing links” to find possible short to long term research strategies and synergies in Europe. Taking into account the requirements of such groups as the regulatory authorities and manufacturers, users and producers, likely changes in the process industries and the potential for exploiting the wide variety of competences and capabilities available in the EU.

In addition, links will be established between researchers, the authorities responsible for directives and standardisation activities on a European and national level and the process industries to encourage communication and to ensure that SMEs and other end-users are informed of important technical, regulatory and policy developments at an early stage.

A S2S web-site (www.S-2-S.org) has been established and will be developed to function as an on-line information and training resource, offering evaluated information through a knowledge management system, acting as a reference point for dissemination of the results of current research projects and providing electronic interactive tools to enable SMEs to identify hazards, assess the risks of their processes and to obtain guidance on suitable control measures.

More information on the S2S Thematic Network is available on-line under www.S-2-S.org and by contacts to the coordination group:

Frank Markert; Risø National Laboratory, Denmark; frank.markert@risoe.dk; +45-4677 5128 (S2S coordinator)

Dirk Oberhagemann; ESMG GmbH, Germany; ober@safetynet.de; +49-(0)2381-271484 (S2S secretary)