30 Years of Responsible Care

at the German Chemical Distribution Association



Christian Westphal

Dear member companies,
dear colleagues in the chemical trade,

as we look back this year on three decades of Responsible Care within the Chemical Trade Association, we see above all a strong shared commitment. This voluntary commitment to go beyond statutory requirements to ensure sustainable development and to promote progress in the areas of the environment, safety and health has always formed the foundation of our business practices.

What began 30 years ago as a forward-looking new beginning is now firmly embedded in the DNA of our industry. Yet a programme of this significance does not thrive on legal requirements on paper, but on the people who bring it to life every day.

This anniversary report therefore focuses on the voices of those who make Responsible Care possible: our RC representatives. It is impressive to see how long-standing colleagues contribute their valuable experience and continuity, whilst newly appointed representatives look to the future with fresh ideas and drive.

This cross-generational exchange and the strong network within our association make it clear that Responsible Care is not a snapshot in time, but a living, ongoing process. The contributions impressively demonstrate that sustainable and responsible action is not only a matter of course for the chemical trade but also our licence for a safe future

I hope you find this a inspiring and informative publication – and I would like to thank you all warmly for your tireless commitment.

Christian Westphal
President, Verband Chemiehandel e.V. (VCH)

15.69 billion euros turnover

624,512 tonnes packaged chemicals

2,913,682.59 tonnes products supplied

Responsibility that unites and inspires
Voices of the RC representatives



Nathalie Adolphs

Environmental protection

69.23 per cent of companies have developed an environmental management system.

67.65 per cent of companies carry out a carbon footprint assessment.

37.76 per cent is the proportion of reusable packaging used.

"As a long-standing member of the Verband Chemiehandel e. V. (VCH) Julius Hoesch has been actively involved in the Responsible Care programme since 2002.
Through this, we voluntarily commit to taking on responsibility beyond the legal requirements and to continuously improving our performance.

From the very beginnings, the focus has been on environmental protection and the conservation of natural resources, safety in the storage, handling and transport of chemicals, health and safety at work, as well as product responsibility and open dialogue with our stakeholders.

Over the past two decades, Responsible Care has continued to evolve. Issues such as sustainability, climate protection, resource efficiency and responsibility throughout the supply chain have become increasingly important and have expanded the scope of the programme.

In the future, we want to preserve what has proven successful, actively tackle new challenges and continuously improve our processes.

Drawing on our many years of experience, we continue to take responsibility towards our employees, business partners, society and the environment – and in this way contribute to the safe and sustainable development of the chemical industry."

Nathalie Adolphs
QMB, Regulatory Affairs/ Product Compliance,
Julius Hoesch GmbH & Co. KG



Christoph Chelminski

Health and safety at work

256 initial risk assessments

1,408 updated risk assessments

60.47 per cent of companies have an occupational health and safety management system.

„When you have been involved with Responsible Care for many years, you realise that the initiative has developed steadily. In the past, the focus was primarily on safety, health and environmental protection. Today, Responsible Care helps to make responsibility visible and measurable throughout the entire value chain.

In the chemical trade, Responsible Care has helped to ensure that issues such as sustainability, compliance and transparency are not merely discussed, but are translated into processes and key performance indicators. As a result, what began as a voluntary initiative has become an important framework for practical application. In my view, the greatest challenge here is not to lose sight of the bigger picture amidst the multitude of new requirements. Sometimes one gets the impression that every step forward is accompanied by a new questionnaire. This makes the working groups of the Chemical Trade Association all the more valuable. They help to assess developments at an early stage, exchange experiences and find practical solutions together. It is precisely this open exchange between member companies that I see as a key factor in the success of Responsible Care.

Responsible Care will continue to play an important role in the future. Whether it's decarbonisation, the circular economy or transparency in supply chains – the industry needs common standards, but also workable solutions. Responsible Care thus remains an important guiding principle for responsible conduct in the chemical trade. After many years with Responsible Care, I am convinced that: the challenges are not diminishing, but neither are the opportunities to make a difference. With this in mind, I look forward to the next chapters of Responsible Care – it certainly won't be boring."

Christoph Chelminski
Quality Manager, C.H. Erbslöh GmbH & Co. KG



Alison Marburger

"For me, Responsible Care is not just another certificate and not just a tick on a checklist, but a mindset. Responsibility means taking an honest look at things, recognising the bigger picture and shaping change in such a way that it fits with the reality of our business.
Safety, sustainability, economic efficiency and strategy go hand in hand in my view. An audit can be a milestone, but whether we take our commitment seriously is only revealed in our day-to-day decisions."

Alison Marburger
Octopus Connection GmbH / RC-representative, WE Chem International GmbH



Pia Mader

"To me, Responsible Care means firmly embedding sustainable and responsible practices into our day-to-day work.
The initiative helps us to consistently take environmental, health and safety considerations into account and to continuously improve our processes.
At the same time, we benefit from the exchange of ideas within the industry, learn from best practices and are able to address new requirements at an early stage."

Pia Mader
Sustainability Manager, TER CHEMICALS GMBH & CO. KG

60 Responsible Care companies within the VCH

94 business locations

7186 employees

203 apprenticeships