

Spring 2013- European Copper Institute News

Copper industry and EU Regulation

● Editorial

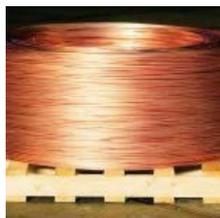


ECI, a "go to source" of scientific information for EU policy makers

As a versatile and indispensable resource, copper products contribute to many aspects of our daily life, that we take for granted, including electricity, heating and cooling, cars and trains, mobile phones and IT equipment. Copper is also an essential element for the healthy development of the human body. However, as with all chemicals, it can also, in the wrong concentrations, forms and locations, cause adverse effects.

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● Feature



Copper on the European regulatory landscape

Copper is an essential element for man, as well as being an important resource for many day-to-day applications. Copper's impacts are wide reaching, including energy & efficiency, construction, sustainable development, transportation and health & environment – all of which are key areas for European policy makers. As a result, it is crucial that regulatory decision-making takes into account the best available and most relevant sources of data.

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● View from the Outside



How industry science has contributed to improved environmental regulation – a case study with metals

Paul Whitehouse is Manager of the Water Research Team at the UK Environment Agency. The Water Framework Directive is arguably the most significant and comprehensive piece of environmental legislation in recent decades. The Directive covers all pressures on the water environment, including chemicals. Substances in the water system can pose both a threat to human health and the environment; those which pose the greatest risk must be identified and controlled in an effective manner.

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● News



Business leaders unite in call to reconcile Europe's climate and industrial policies

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Results from US trial published in May issue of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology

The eagerly anticipated infection rate reduction paper, from the US trial, was published in the May issue of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, the journal of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, in a special issue focused on the role of the environment in preventing health-care associated infections (HCAIs).

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ECI publishes its 2012 Annual Report

ECI's newly published 2012 Annual Report highlights how copper based solutions are helping to address today's social, economic and environmental challenges in key markets, including energy and electricity, building construction and healthcare.

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● Video



Improving the assessment of EU water resources

The European Copper Institute's video 'Improving the assessment of EU water resources' outlines the collaborative partnership between ECI and the Water Research Team at the UK Environment Agency.

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May 13

ECI, a “go to source” of scientific information for EU policy makers

Author: [John Schonenberger](#)

Tags:

Comments: [No Comments](#)



As a versatile and indispensable resource, copper products contribute to many aspects of our daily life, that we take for granted, including electricity, heating and cooling, cars and trains, mobile phones and IT equipment. Copper is also an essential element for the healthy development of the human body. However, as with all chemicals, it can also, in the wrong concentrations, forms and locations, cause adverse effects.

Policy makers and regulators therefore require authoritative, up-to-date science to help set new environmental quality standards, e.g. for water, soils and sediments. Equally, research can be used to build awareness of the role copper can play to help secure EU objectives, such as tackling climate change.

In this spring 2013 edition of Copper Wire, we take a closer look at the European Copper Institute's role as a 'go to source' of scientific information for EU policy makers. As a member of the global Copper Alliance, one of ECI's core functions is to review the vast array of historical research on copper's impacts on the environment and on human health, to fill key data-gaps through independent, scientific research, and to consolidate findings into reports, such as the Copper Voluntary Risk Assessment and the REACH dossier, for use by policy makers and regulators.

A regulator's perspective on this competence is provided by Paul Whitehouse, *Science Manager, Chemicals and Radioactive Substances at UK Environment Agency*. Paul gives a detailed insight into his experience of scientific collaboration with ECI and the beneficial impact this has had on improving the EU's Water Framework Directive.

John Schonenberger
 Chief Executive
 European Copper Institute

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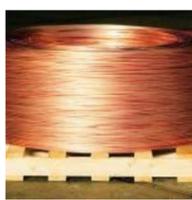


Copper on the European regulatory landscape

Author: **Katrien Delbeke**

Tags:

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Copper on the European regulatory landscape

Copper is an essential element for man, as well as being an important resource for many day-to-day applications. Copper's impacts are wide reaching, including energy & efficiency, construction, sustainable development, transportation and health & environment – all of which are key areas for European policy makers. As a result, it is crucial that regulatory decision-making takes into account the best available and most relevant sources of data.

Throughout the past fifteen years, ECI has met its duty of care by supporting a broad variety of scientific research projects on issues such as surface water and soil protection, products in contact with food and drinking water, and occupational exposure levels. These have been used to develop the most comprehensive reference datasets and best practice risk management practices for inclusion in the Voluntary Risk Assessment (approved by the Commission and Member States back in 2008) and the REACH registration dossier, submitted in November 2010.

Due to copper's status as an essential dietary element, ECI also supported an assessment on the impacts and risks of copper deficiency within the general population. This showed that human health impacts from deficiency are of far greater concern than those arising out of toxicity.

ECI provides a point of interaction between science and policy makers

ECI adopts an open and collaborative approach, to the scope and terms of research, to ensure that policy maker questions and queries are appropriately addressed. As a result, its research output can offer highly credible and accurate contributions during the creation of new/revised law(s) such as the EU's Water Framework Directive (discussed later in the *View from the Outside*). In this instance, ECI funded research was a key point of guidance in setting water quality criteria, across the EU, that provide adequate protection of local environments. The same research helps set scientifically relevant emission limits for the industry's operations and its products. Achieving this type of balance is key to providing a credible platform on which the copper industry can play its part in helping EU industry respond to the Commission's challenge – to build its contribution to EU GDP, up from today's 16%, to 20% by 2020.

It is well recognised that the specificities of naturally occurring metals require methodologies that are, on occasions, different to those used to regulate man-made, organic chemicals. For example, scientific methodologies, established during ECI's Voluntary Risk Assessment (VRA), have been included in the metal-specific sections of the EU guidance document on *"How to set environmental quality criteria standards"*. Importantly, this guidance includes how to incorporate the concept of metal bioavailability, as well as how to take into account the naturally occurring, background levels of metals in water.

ECI's research agenda covers both proactive and reactive items. As an example of the former, ECI was proactive, back in 2000, in gathering scientific data for its Voluntary Risk Assessment for copper. This solid body of evidence, reviewed and approved in 2008, under the former Technical Committee for New and Existing Substances (TCNES) legislation, provided a solid platform for today's REACH Registration dossier. On other occasions, research is more reactive to the policy agenda in a Member State. We have several examples where national policy makers have reached out to ECI for support in resourcing and developing neutral, scientific research. For example, ECI and UK authorities have jointly supported research, relevant to the integration of metal bioavailability, into compliance checking under the Water Framework Directive. At the request of regulators, ECI has been able to provide data to fill gaps (inhalation toxicity), thus strengthening the relevance of future regulation.

The European Commission and EU Member States can play a direct role in setting the scope for ECI's research. To optimise the usage of resources (time and money), regulatory experts have been invited to provide input into the planning phase (e.g. on the workplace inhalation and marine mesocosm studies). This input is crucial since accommodating different points of view helps to ensure the relevance of the research. It also ensures full transparency between all parties, key to building a constructive working relationship based on trust.

ECI provides a commercially neutral and credible source

It is important for ECI to maintain neutrality and credibility in order for its research to be valued and trusted among EU policy makers.

All ECI funded research is conducted by well-known, respected scientists. ECI's Voluntary Risk Assessment was carried out under the guidance of two peer review panels, one for the environment, the other for human health, each with four independent experts. Upon completion, it was reviewed by the Italian authorities (review country for the risk assessment), the French authorities (rapporteur for the copper biocide dossiers), the EU Technical Committee on New and Existing Substances (TCNES) and the EU Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental risks (SCHER).

Contrary to the beliefs of many, science funded by industry bodies does not always yield pro-industry results. Proof of ECI's scientific neutrality is that it will recommend action based on the available scientific data, even if this does not support the immediate business objectives of a member company. One specific example was ECI's recommendation (based on discovery through research into the bioavailability of copper in different forms) to lower the safe levels of copper in sensitive surface waters, below the Environmental Quality Standard values set in some EU Member States.

Investing for copper's future

ECI has been at the forefront of scientific research for many years and all the data, collected and incorporated into the Voluntary Risk Assessment, has been publicly available on the ECHA (European Chemicals Agency) website since 2008. Recently, ECI's environmental projects have been oriented towards further reducing uncertainties in, for example, the setting of marine and estuarine quality standards and in assessing the hazards and risks of complex materials such as copper concentrates and slags.

ECI remains committed to help policy makers and the public better understand, through neutral scientific research, the very important, but safe, role that copper plays across a variety of sectors and applications.

Dr. Katrien Delbeke

Director, Health, Environment and Sustainable Development

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How industry science has contributed to improved environmental regulation – a case study with metals

Author: **Paul Whitehouse**
Tags:

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Paul Whitehouse is Manager of the Water Research Team at the UK Environment Agency.

The Water Framework Directive is arguably the most significant and comprehensive piece of environmental legislation in recent decades. The Directive covers all pressures on the water environment, including chemicals. Substances in the water system can pose both a threat to human health and the environment; those which pose the greatest risk must be identified and controlled in an effective manner.

The UK Environment Agency is responsible for implementing national and international environmental legislation like the WFD. This means the EA must work in close collaboration with the UK government and ministries, and provides technical support to policymakers in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. For example, when we look at Environmental Quality Standards (EQSs) for hazardous substances, EQSs for the most hazardous metals, like mercury, are set at an EU-wide level. However, each member state is responsible for setting EQSs for other hazardous materials (Specific Pollutants) that are emitted but are not covered by EU standards, as the UK has done with guidance from the Environment Agency on about 30 or 40 substances.

As part of their Specific Pollutants programme, the UK Environment Agency has collaborated with the European Copper Institute on research which has informed decisions surrounding the Water Framework Directive. As a result of this two-way collaboration, significant information has been generated due to the pooling of combined resources – resources that would not otherwise have been available. Such results demonstrate that great progress can be made in terms of guiding our understanding of the risks posed by metals in the environment which benefit both regulators and the metal industry as a whole. Indicative of the benefit of such collaborations, others have also taken place, such as between the Danish authorities and the Nickel industry.

Steps to collaboration

Around 10 years ago, a more comprehensive understanding of metal bioavailability emerged from research, initially in the USA and then in Europe. Bioavailability had previously been largely ignored, meaning potentially inaccurate levels for EQS results were being used. ECI and the Environment Agency built on the academic studies by commissioning research at the Universities of Gent and Lancaster which drove the research in order to move the research toward the development of regulatory tools. The involvement of specialist contractors was also key to the application of this science.

ECI did two things at this time:

- Publicised approach and research to regulators
- Discovered significant pieces of work by independent contractors in order to narrow the gap and demonstrate other solutions to regulators

A meeting of minds

The UK was ahead of the curve at this point in terms of considering using bioavailability-based approaches for regulating metals and was open to receiving information from ECI. The benefit of the research conducted was clear to the Environment Agency and it was recognised that ECI was funding and providing relevant research. Both organisations had a shared interest in translating research into practical steps for regulating metals in a more scientifically robust way.

Despite potential scepticism from some surrounding industry-led research, this was not a consideration in this instance. The Environment Agency was open to working with ECI, as had been done previously with other regulators, agencies and industry associations. In order to maintain neutrality, it was crucial that independence was maintained in all decision making, which meant that sometimes the research was interpreted a little differently by the industry partner and the Environment Agency. Rather it was a case of the two entities moving forward broadly in the same direction. In the example of the EQS value, industry has an interest in pushing this to the highest possible level permissible and environmental NGOs want to see this level at the lowest possible level. In this case, the Environment Agency considered all available research and took an objective view which was not necessarily a preferable level for industry.

ECI was never perceived to be lobbying for the desired outcome; rather, it was funding and providing research in order to inform the development of useable tools and policy decisions. Despite an inherent interest from ECI for the EU to agree on information provided, it was simply presented and made available to all. Progress was helped by maintaining an open and personable relationship throughout.

A shared agenda and desire to find solutions to problems drove the on-going collaboration.

Taking a second example, the development of a simplified tool to predict bioavailability would not have been possible without industry input. The complex biotic ligand models developed through research were too complex to use on a day-to-day basis so a key strand of the collaboration has been to develop a simple screening tool. Due to the collaboration, bioavailability can now be measured with confidence and complex science has become usable by regulatory agencies. It is worth noting at this point that industry did not own the new model (M-BAT), it was simply funded and created in order to be used by all.

Conclusion

Most of the work on this aspect of the WFD is largely complete. However, the Environment Agency would collaborate with ECI again on future projects. The benefit to industry is evident when looking at the example of the Water Framework Directive and the impact that joint research with industry funding had on the outcome in terms of both benefiting industry and environmental regulation activities. Following on from the Environment Agency implementing bioavailability, the UK government took it upon itself to promote the approach to the European Commission and now the bioavailability-based approach to metals regulation is now firmly established in European legislation.

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Business leaders unite in call to reconcile Europe's climate and industrial policies

Author: [Irina Dumitrescu](#)
Tags:

Comments: [No Comments](#)



On 23rd February, CEOs of the largest non-ferrous metal companies in Europe, including six ECI member companies, addressed an open letter to President Barroso. This urged a rethink of the short-term fixes to the European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and a comprehensive review of Europe's industrial, energy and climate change policies – an area of vital interest for the copper industry. Rather than focusing on quick fixes, such as the back-loading of allowances, business leaders proposed concrete, long-term solutions for the re-design of the ETS.

Coinciding with discussions by EU figures, regarding ways to improve the function of the ETS, Eurometaux representatives presented their viewpoint that a functioning cap and trade system is the most cost effective tool to reduce Europe's GHG emissions. Consequently, business leaders are united to ensure that it remains central to climate change policy.

In order to maintain Europe's industrial competitiveness, encourage industry to stay in Europe and attract new investment, upcoming policy measures should include:

- Benchmark-based EU allocations, for direct and indirect emissions, for energy intensive industries
- Allocations based on actual industry production
- Symmetric and reciprocal linkage to other carbon trading schemes

Recent EU policies, such as the "back-loading" of allowances and other short-term measures, have had a detrimental effect on the industry's global competitiveness and will eventually result in higher carbon costs for European industry. Such policies will also enhance industry closures and carbon leakage as well as push investments in the manufacturing industry to outside the EU zone.

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Results from US trial published in May issue of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology

Author: [Irina Dumitrescu](#)

Tags:

Comments: [No Comments](#)



The eagerly anticipated infection rate reduction paper, from the US trial, was published in the May issue of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, the journal of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, in a special issue focused on the role of the environment in preventing health-care associated infections (HCAIs).

Results from the trial show that the use of antimicrobial copper surfaces in intensive care units (ICUs) can reduce the number of HCAIs by 58%, compared to patients treated in ICUs with non-copper touch surfaces. This is the first time that an intervention, designed to reduce microbial burden, has had a positive, clinical impact on ICU patients. These results offer real benefits for EU citizens, since 1 out of every 14 hospital patients develops an HCAI, resulting in an estimated 147,000 deaths every year.

The journal article highlights that, although numerous strategies have been developed to decrease these infections, antimicrobial copper is the only one that works continuously, has scientifically-proven efficacy and does not depend on human behaviour. It also demonstrates that copper surfaces work in tandem with standard infection prevention practices to significantly reduce microbial burden and HCAIs.

The study was funded by the United States Department of Defense and was conducted in the ICUs of three major US hospitals: The Medical University of South Carolina, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City and the Ralph H Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Centre in Charleston, South Carolina. It follows on from research in hospitals in the UK, Germany, Japan and Chile exploring copper's ability to continuously reduce bioburden. Based on this research, hospitals around the world are now installing antimicrobial copper touch services to help reduce the spread of HCAIs.

Click [here](#) to read the paper.

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COPPER ESSENTIAL FOR EVERYONE

ECI publishes its 2012 Annual Report

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Author: [Irina Dumitrescu](#)
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ECI's newly published 2012 Annual Report highlights how copper based solutions are helping to address today's social, economic and environmental challenges in key markets, including energy and electricity, building construction and healthcare.

2012 was a difficult year for the European copper industry, as a whole, due to government austerity programs, stricter borrowing conditions for consumers and low activity levels, particularly in most national construction markets. The International Copper Study Group estimates that EU27 refined total copper usage was 3.1 million tonnes, 7% below the 2011 total.

Despite the 2012 results, the benefits provided by the copper industry's products have probably never been as important in meeting the key needs of the world we live in. One of the roles of ECI is to raise awareness of these societal benefits to policymakers and regulators, to value chain decision-makers and to the general public in order to secure competitiveness, growth and therefore employment within the European industry.

Read the report online [here](#).

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Improving the assessment of EU water resources

Author: [Irina Dumitrescu](#)
Tags: Comments: **No Comments**



The European Copper Institute's video '*Improving the assessment of EU water resources*' outlines the collaborative partnership between ECI and the Water Research Team at the UK Environment Agency. The video, available on [YouTube](#), highlights the role each partner played in understanding and assessing the importance of bioavailability in helping to set appropriate limit values within the EU's Water Framework Directive.

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