

# Health Care Without Harm Europe

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*Working to transform the healthcare sector so it is no longer a source of harm to people and the environment*

A close-up photograph of a person's hands in blue medical scrubs holding a clear plastic IV bag. The bag is partially filled with a clear liquid and has a white drip chamber and clear tubing attached. The background is a plain, light blue wall.

**Annual  
Report  
2008**

## Letter from the Board

These days, barely a week goes by when environmental health issues are not covered in the medical-scientific journals, where a quick search of a medical literature database will reveal hundreds of publications in 2008, ranging from pure science about the effects of environmental chemicals on health, to calls to nurses to take the lead in greening healthcare. Awareness of the danger to human health posed by climate change has most notably exploded in 2008.

In 2008 after years of lobbying by Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH Europe) the EU agreed on an export ban and safe storage of surplus metallic mercury, coming into force in March 2011. While this is a major success the export ban unfortunately does not cover mercury thermometers or sphygmomanometers, so we continue to work on these issues.

Following the work of Wennmalm and others in Sweden, attention is being focussed on the occurrence of pharmaceutical residues in ground and drinking water. Although it is still unclear what effect on health chronic low dose exposure to a myriad of medication residues will have, recent studies performed by our research group, and others, have shown the foetus, nursing infant and very ill child to be the most at risk.

The Swedish model of grading medications according to their characteristics of persistence, bio-accumulation and toxicity (PBT) and then actively choosing therapies with the least environmentally damaging characteristics is a formidable tool for daily clinical practice and an excellent plumb-line for the pharmaceutical industry in their development of new medications.

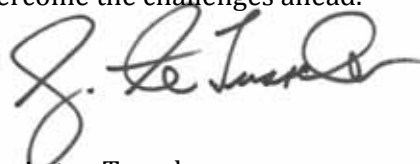
We have known for more than thirty years that DEHP, a common softener in PVC (polyvinyl chloride) products, leaks from products during use. Although there are now better alternatives for almost all PVC and DEHP containing products used in daily clinical practice, the challenge re-

mains to educate healthcare professionals about the harm of PVC and DEHP and to motivate them to choose better alternatives. We are pleased that DEHP is on the list of the European Chemical Agency to be considered for phase-out in the future. This will probably take another two years of intensive debate and lobbying.

As healthcare professionals it is our primary concern to prevent and treat disease. We need to be more aware of the consequences of our choices of therapies. As such, HCWH remains a unique organisation campaigning for better healthcare. There remains a need for education, motivation and support for environmental changes in health care throughout Europe.

HCWH Europe mastered a difficult journey in 2008. We closed our office in Prague, put tight budget control in place while a new strategy in consultation with the members was developed. The members changed HCWH Europe's Bylaws in Sept 2008. After a one-year stint as Executive Director, Jamie Page stepped down from this post. Jamie continues to bring his expertise into HCWH Europe through his own member organisation of HCWH. I am delighted to introduce Anja Letz who took over from Jamie. Per Rosander joined our Board of Directors in 2008.

On behalf of HCWH I would like to thank our members and partners, who make our work possible. HCWH Europe continues to collaborate with other organisations and members to implement changes in EU legislation, regarding health and environment, and in the implementation phase at national and hospital level. We need to join forces to overcome the challenges ahead.



Dr. Gavin ten Tusscher,

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Health Care Without Harm Europe

## Mission and Goals of HCWH Europe

Health Care Without Harm is a global coalition of more than 470 groups in 52 countries. We are working together to transform the healthcare industry so that, without compromising patient safety or care, it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to people and the environment.

Our membership is diverse, including hospitals and healthcare systems, medical and nursing professionals, community groups, health-affected constituencies, labour unions, and environment and health organisations.

We have forged successful partnerships with global bodies including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization, national unions such as the Royal College of Nursing, major NGOs such as Friends of the Earth Germany, and regional health authorities such as Stockholm County Council, Sweden.

By working with diverse constituencies from around the world, we are achieving the following:

- Creating markets and policies for safer products, materials and chemicals used in healthcare while promoting safer substitutes, including products that avoid mercury, PVC and brominated flame retardants.
- Eliminating incineration of medical waste, minimising the amount and toxicity of all waste generated, and promoting safer waste treatment practices.
- Transforming the design, construction and operation of healthcare facilities to minimise

their environmental impact and foster healthy, healing environments.

- Encouraging food purchasing systems that support sustainable food production and distribution, and providing healthy food on-site at a healthcare facilities.
- Securing a safe and healthy workplace for all healthcare workers.
- Ensuring patients, workers and communities have full access to information about chemicals used in healthcare and can participate in decisions about chemical exposures.
- Promoting human rights and environmental justice for communities affected by the healthcare industry, while assuring that problems are not displaced from one community to another.



Countries marked in green have members in HCWH Europe

# Developments in 2008

## Safer materials in medical devices

**Mercury export ban:** The EU agreed to ban export of liquid mercury and some mercury-based substances. Prior to the vote we sent a letter and voting recommendations to MEPs. We publicised the results with project partners the European Environmental Bureau and the Health and Environment Alliance.



Coverage of the mercury export ban in ENDS Europe

**Mercury Sphygmomanometer restrictions:** As part of our on-going work to end the use of mercury in sphygmomanometers, we surveyed major manufacturers to get a better sense of the extent of use of mercury in blood pressure devices. We engaged our members in national research, supplying them with model questions, to make a comprehensive submission to the EU Commission for its report on the use of mercury-free sphygmomanometers in Europe.

**Input into reform of scientific committees.** We were involved in a consultation process which resulted in an EU commitment to partly revise the Scientific Committee mandates to include more effort to recruit external scientists.

**Medical Device Labelling:** We presented our views on phthalate labelling in medical devices to the EU Commission, for formulation of the man-

date for the European Standardisation Committee (a separate body) to develop a harmonised European standard for the label. Our work here met with some success: in future, medical devices containing substances which are classified as mutagenic, reprotoxic or carcinogenic will have to be labelled as such.

**Publicising first ever eco-label certification of a medical device.** For the first time ever, an eco-labels (in this case the Nordic Swan) has been developed and applied to a medical device. Particularly significantly, the device has to be PVC-free to qualify for certification. Now in a pilot phase for the new standard, the Swan is being applied to some dialysis equipment – a development we publicised through press releases in cooperation with a member of the Swan working group which developed the criteria.



A Medical News Today article about the Nordic Swan

**Selected Member Activities:** In the UK, ToxCats completed a series of beginners' guides to environmental health, including dioxin, and endocrine disruptors, as well as publishing six issues of ToxCats magazine. In Sweden, Uppsala University Hospital has been active in raising awareness of potential problems associated with the use of silver and nanotechnology, organising Swedish County Council purchasing workshops, national media coverage, and is in regular contact with EU DGs.

## Waste Management and Incineration

**Waste Framework Directive:** HCWHE coordinated sending a letter to MEPs on behalf of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment, which expressed the concerns of 33,000 physicians about the health consequences of controversial proposals which would encourage building of energy-efficient incinerators.



Our release about the letter from the doctors associations

In spite of the doctors' concerns, the proposals were passed. After the vote a potential conflict-of-interest was revealed, regarding WFD rapporteur Caroline Jackson's connections in the waste industry. We worked with GAIA to place a story in Private Eye (UK) about this.

## Pharmaceuticals

**Proper Disposal:** As part of our efforts to raise awareness of the hazards posed by pharmaceuticals in the natural environment and the excellent work by Stockholm County Council (a HCWHE member) to address this, we have been talking to Members of Parliament, local councils and pharmacies in the UK.

We had a question asked in the UK Parliament about enforcement of EU regulations regarding unused drug take-back, and were assured that measures are in effect. We then carried out a telephone survey of UK local councils to find out if this is true: although all the councils we called gave correct advice, take-back is so poorly advertised we wonder if take-back schemes are effective. Anecdotal evidence we collected from pharmacies suggests awareness is increasing but more could certainly be done.

Swedish Doctors for the Environment have been running workshops on pharmaceuticals in the environment, presenting the issue to the International Society of Doctors for the Environment, which adopted it.

**HCWH Activities Worldwide:** HCWH and the World Health Organization (WHO) joined together to lead a global partnership to eliminate mercury in healthcare by 2017. Currently HCWH is involved in mercury-reduction activities in the healthcare sectors in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, and South Africa.

**US:** HCWH and Practice Greenhealth have with Premier, the largest US Group Purchasing organization, launched the Healthcare Clean Energy Exchange (HCEE), which uses energy education of the health care sector and the ability to procure cheaper, cleaner energy through "reverse auctions." 150 hospitals have signed the "Healthy Food in Healthcare" pledge.

**Latin America:** The mercury phase-out campaign has gathered pace, with a national green healthcare conference in Mexico and a developing relationship with the Ministry of Health in Argentina.

**South-East Asia:** The Philippine Government responded to calls to end payments on a loan scheme for sub-standard medical waste incinerators, while mercury phase-out is progressing under a new Administrative Order discontinuing the distribution of mercury thermometers.

## Communication

Further development of content and design of our newsletter has resulted in favourable changes in the number of people reading articles and independent promotion of the newsletter on blogs and the ISDE newsletter.

The UK Sustainable Development Commission (UK) has publicised our food report and fact-sheets, while the Soil Association (UK) has been using our factsheets to promote healthy food in hospitals.

Our website has undergone lengthy and extensive review, for relaunch in 2009 as a central clearinghouse for information and tools relating to environmental issues in healthcare, serving the global campaign.



Further modifications to the design and content of our newsletter were well-received by our readers.



**Hospital Visits:** We visited Karolinska University Hospital (Sweden), the Cornwall Hospital Trust and Birmingham Heartlands Hospital (UK) to see the differences in their waste management systems and find out more about what the UK and Sweden can learn from each other.



**Waste segregation:** Vital for saving money, Karolinska is particularly efficient at on-ward segregation, in part due to these separate bins. Many hospitals do not believe this is feasible; part of the work of HCWHE is to show that it is very much possible to implement these systems.

# Growth and Development

## Financial Management

Due to changes in EU funding for associations which meant we could not apply for an EU grant for 2008, we suffered a major funding cut at the end of 2007.

The priority activities for 2008 became cost-containment: we closed the Czech office, further minimised overheads by running a virtual office from the UK, and scaled back campaigning work to free up capital to restructure the organisation so we would be in a position to apply for EU funds again in 2009.

We have to a great degree been successful: by the end of 2008, we have cash reserves which will allow us to open a new office in Brussels, taking us closer to policy work and opening up more opportunities for funding in 2010. Our mini-grants programme will see innovative projects attractive to funders.

## Mini-Grants

In order to continue supporting members, nurturing the development of replicable projects and sharing of expertise within the network, we offered members small seed grants for new projects.

We received a record number of responses, including waste management, use of mercury, safer use of biocides (a new area), PVC substitution and a UK forum for coordinating action on environmental issues in healthcare.

## New Members

This year we are pleased to have Communities Against Toxics (ToxCats) Scotland (UK) and Jamtlands Lans Lansting (Jamtlands County Council, Sweden) join HCWH Europe, taking the total number of organisations who have joined the European network to 66.

## A Brief History of Health Care Without Harm

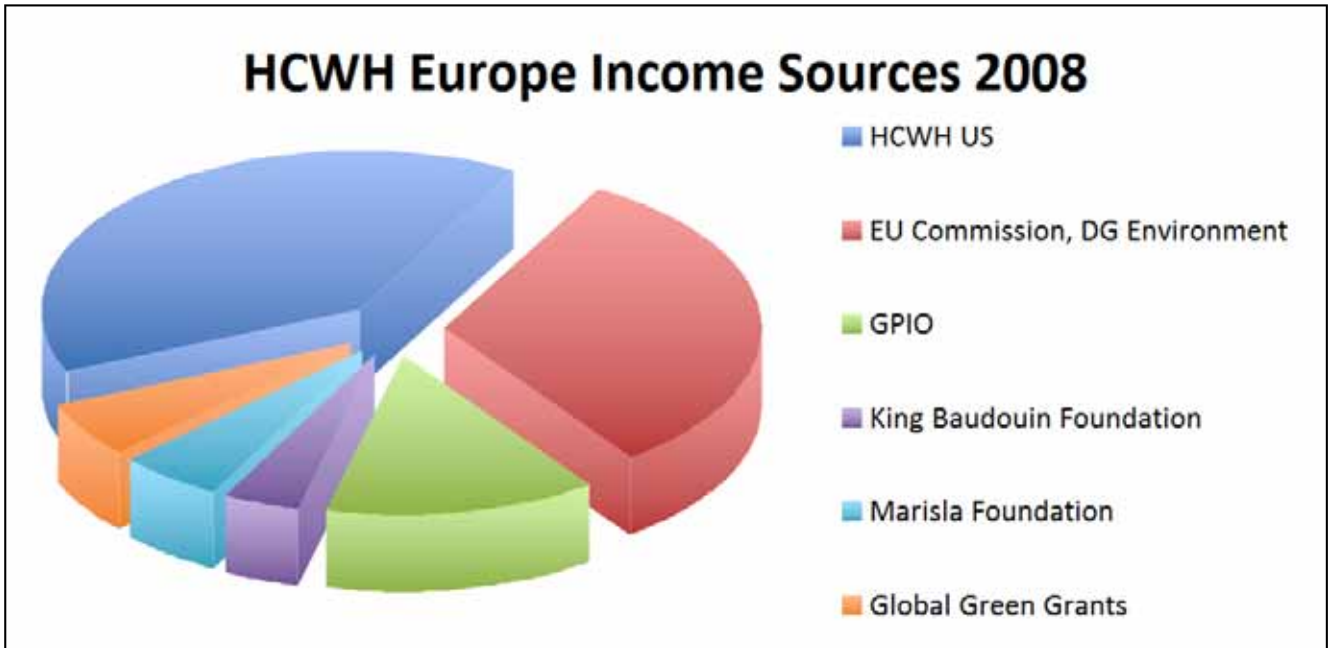
In 1994 the US Environmental Protection Agency discovered that medical waste incinerators were responsible for 40% of total dioxin pollution in the US. Shocked that hospitals could be doing so much harm to human health and the environment, a group of environmental and health organisations got together to tackle the problem. In 1996 a new type of organisation was born.

By 1999 Health Care Without Harm was looking to expand into Europe. A number of environmental groups began cooperating to lay the path for formal establishment of HCWH Europe as an organisation in 2003, when it was registered in the Netherlands and then the Czech Republic.

Today, HCWH Europe has over 60 members in 23 European countries. Member organisations include Stockholm County Council and Karolinska University Hospital (Sweden), the Royal College of Nursing, Vienna Hospital Association (Austria) and the International Society of Doctors for the Environment.

Although HCWH Europe has full constitutional autonomy from other HCWH offices around the world, it is tightly integrated into the global campaign. The office is developing an important role not only in improving the environmental profile of European healthcare, but in placing the EU at the forefront of green healthcare.

# Financial Donations



Funder	Income in 2008, EUR
HCWH US	146381
EU Commission, DG Environment	118602
GPIO	50914
King Baudouin Foundation	14961
Marisla Foundation	18621
Global Green Grants	21099



## Composition of the Board

### **C. Vyvyan Howard MB. ChB. PhD. FRCPath**

Vyvyan is a medically-qualified toxico-pathologist and the leader of the Bioimaging Research Group (BRG) at the Centre for Molecular Bioscience at the University of Ulster in the UK.

Through his research he became concerned about the potentially synergistic effects of the mixtures of pollutants to which we are daily exposed. In recent years he has become involved in researching the toxicological properties of nano-particles. He has co-edited a book on endocrine disrupters.

### **Per Rosander**

Per has extensive experience in NGOs and environment consultancy, working for organisations including Apoteket (the state-owned pharmacy in Sweden) and Greenpeace International. He also helped establish HCWH Europe in 2003.

Per graduated in chemistry and political science at Linnköping University, Sweden, in 1987 before going on to research monoclonal antibodies and cancer at the Swedish Institute of Cancer Immunology. In 2003 he was appointed Director of the International Chemical Secretariat (Chemsec). In 2007 he established Enviroaction, an environment consultancy firm, and has recently returned to Chemsec as Acting Director.

### **Dr. Gavin ten Tusscher, MD, PhD**

Gavin is a consultant paediatrician at the Department of Paediatrics and Neonatology of the Westfriesgasthuis, Hoorn, the Netherlands. He works as a paediatrician in a 500-bed hospital with large out-patient clinic.

His Ph.D. thesis (2002) was on the later childhood health effects of perinatal exposure to background levels of dioxins in the Netherlands. He continues to do research on paediatric environmental health issues and regularly lectures, publishes in peer-reviewed medical journals, and teaches and trains medical students and junior doctors.

### **Anja Leetz**

Anja created and coordinated “Chemical Reaction” – a Brussels-based cooperative project between the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE) and Greenpeace. The project’s goal was to activate the European public on chemical issues.

Since January 2007 Anja has been fundraising for Friends of the Earth Europe. She has extensive experience in the environmental movement and NGO work. She has also worked as a freelance photographer in London.

## Staff

Jamie Page	<i>Executive Director</i>
Paul Whaley	<i>Communications Coordinator</i>
Lisette van Vliet	<i>Brussels Policy Advisor</i>
Joan Marc Simon	<i>Waste Policy Advisor</i>

## List of Members

Name of Organisation	Country
Armenian Women for Health and a Healthy Environment (AWHHE)	Armenia
Women for Green Way for Generations	Armenia
ETA Umweltmanagement GmbH	Austria
Otto Wagner Hospital Centre of Social Medicine	Austria
The Institute for Sustainable Healthcare (INGES)	Austria
Vienna Health Care Institutions Association (KAV)	Austria
Foundation for Realisation of Ideas	Belarus
IPA Ecosphere	Belarus
Belgian Platform Environment and Health	Belgium
International Chemical Secretariat	Belgium
ARNIKA Association	Czech Republic
Ecological Council	Denmark
Endometriose Foundation	Denmark
Gentofte County Hospital	Denmark
Sonderborg Hospital	Denmark
Sygehus Nord Health Care Institutions - Nykobing Thisted	Denmark
The Health Care Institutions Services of Aarhus County	Denmark
Association of Independent Doctors for the Environment and Public Health	France
Committee for Environmental Health	France
C2DS - Committee for Sustainable Development in Healthcare	France
National Centre for Independent Information on Waste (CNIID)	France

## List of Members (continued)

Name of Organisation	Country
BUND - Friends of the Earth Germany	Germany
European Institute for Transfer of Technology, Info Management and Communication (ETIK)	Germany
Institute for Environmental Medicine and Health Care, Freiburg	Germany
Irish Doctor's Environmental Association (IDEA)	Ireland
Organisation for Ecologically Sustainable Waste Management	Ireland
ALERR	Italy
Central Clinic of Colle Cesarano	Italy
Ecobaby Foundation	Netherlands
Mother Earth Foundation	Netherlands
Waste and Environment Foundation	Netherlands
Women In Europe for a Common Future	Netherlands
Waste Prevention Association 3R	Poland
Macedonian Association of Doctors for the Environment MADE	Republic of Macedonia
Cleaner Production and Energy Efficiency Center	Republic of Moldova
Life Youth Foundation	Romania
Baikal Environmental Wave	Russia
Kaliningrad Children and Youth Invalids (NGO "Maria")	Russia
Friends of the Earth Slovakia	Slovakia
Slovenian Clean Production and Right-to-Know Action Club	Slovenia
Children's Health Care Institutions University	Spain
Consultants for Sustainable Development	Sweden
Country Council of Jämtlands	Sweden
County Council of Sörmland	Sweden

## List of Members (continued)

Name of Organisation	Country
Jegrelius Research Centre	Sweden
Karolinska University Health Care Institutions	Sweden
Malmö University Health Care Institutions MAS	Sweden
Stockholm County Council	Sweden
Swedish Doctors for the Environment	Sweden
Uppsala University Departments of Clinical Microbiology and Earth Sciences	Sweden
International Council of Nurses	Switzerland
International Society of Doctors for the Environment	Switzerland
Physicians for the Environment Switzerland, AefU	Switzerland
Schelker Environmental Consulting	Switzerland
Swiss Health Care Institutions Association, H+ The Health Care Institutions of Switzerland	Switzerland
British Society for Ecological Medicine	UK
Cancer Prevention and Education Society	UK
Communities Against Toxics	UK
Communities Against Toxics (ToxCats) Scotland	UK
Medact - ISDE UK	UK
Royal College of Nursing RCN	UK
Soil Association	UK
International Society of Doctors for the Environment Ukraine	Ukraine
MAMA-86-Kharkov	Ukraine

# Balance Sheet

**Health Care Without Harm - Europe**

**Balance Sheet  
31 December 2008**

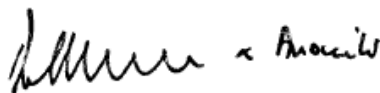
	€	€
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Plant and machinery	1,095	
Computer equipment	<u>3,577</u>	4,672
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Trade debtors	39,683	
Prepayments	943	
Bank deposit account	121,180	
Bank account no. 1	16,381	
US \$ Bank ac	<u>84,782</u>	
	<u>262,969</u>	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade creditors	27,305	
Accrued expenses	<u>6,341</u>	
	<u>33,646</u>	<u>229,323</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>233,995</u>
<b>FINANCED BY</b>		
<b>CAPITAL ACCOUNT</b>		
Brought forward	123,650	
Add		
Retained income	<u>110,345</u>	<u>233,995</u>
		<u>233,995</u>

# Accountant's Report

**Financial Statements**  
**for the Year Ended 31 December 2008**

**Accountants' Report to**  
**Health Care Without Harm - Europe**

As described below, you have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008 set out on pages three to five. In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled these financial statements from the accounting records and explanations supplied to us and have inspected all documents which we considered necessary for the purposes of preparation of those financial statements. We are satisfied that these statements comply with those records and documents and accordingly certify that to the best of our knowledge and belief these financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and give a true and fair view of the organisation's assets and liabilities, its financial position and the results of its operations for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008



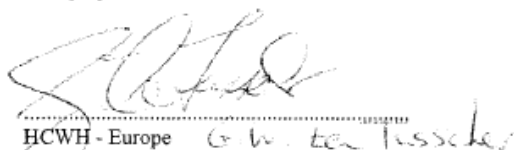
**DAVID FRUMIN & ASSOCIATES**  
Chartered Accountants  
48 Queen Street  
EXETER EX4 3SR

David Frumin & Associates  
Chartered Accountants  
Queensgate House  
48 Queen Street  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX4 3SR

Date: 24-01-2009

**Client Approval Certificate**

We approve the financial statements and confirm that I have made available all relevant records and information for their preparation.



HCWH - Europe G. W. ten Tusscher

Date: 24-01-2009