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ASBESTOS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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Mr. Horst Kutsch,
Wirtschaftsverband Asbestzement e.V,
Harvestehueer Weg 18,
2000 Hamburg 13,
W. Germany.

also to:
Dipl. Kim Harald Merkel,
Martin Merkel K.G.,
Postfach 93 02 80,
2102 Hamburg 93.

9 July 1981

13 JUL 1981

Dear Mr. Kutsch,

Organisation of Associations

At our AIA Executive Committee Meeting on July 7/8 the recent events in Germany were considered and very great concern was expressed at the implications for Germany and, following from this, for us all.

It was this latter consideration with all its grave implications which led the Executive Committee to feel that they should communicate with both WVA and WVAZ to advise them earnestly to consider forming one National German Association to deal exclusively with the asbestos and health issue and quite separate from commercial or scientific organisations.

The advantages are clear:-

(a) Concentration and identity of viewpoint and thus of representations to Government, Unions, Media and the Public, so avoiding conflicting action.

(b) A stronger voice because of speaking for a larger organisation.

A method of achieving a single German Asbestos Association for this particular purpose without wasting precious time might be as follows:-

(a) Those people in WVA and WVAZ who are concerned with asbestos and health and its impact on Government/Unions/Media/the Public should be joined into a small group and form the new Association, leaving the other two Associations with responsibility for just their commercial activities.

(b) A headquarters to be set up in the most convenient facilities which exist. A responsible official should be available at all times.

(c) To preserve an identity for this new Association which would be separate from any existing Association, company or organisation, a neutral address should be used.

Hoping you receive this in the spirit in which it's sent
With my kindest regards
Yours
N. Stack

Sir Neville Stack

cc for information: Executive Committee

Directors: Mr. L. van der Rest (Belgium); Dr. R. Gaze, Sir Neville Stack (Secretary)
Reg no. 1392454 England Registered office as above

TURNER & NEWALL LIMITED

MANCHESTER

FROM	TO
H.D.S. HARDIE	MR. R. K. DAY, TAC CM Ltd.

COPY TO RDNS

9th July 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

ASBESTOS DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMANY

At yesterday's meeting of the Executive Committee of the AIA, Mr. Schermer (German Eternit), who was standing in for Dr. Schwarz, gave a brief and pessimistic account of developments in Germany and I thought that you would be interested to receive my summary of those comments.

The present position appears to be that the Federal Government Environmental Protection Agency is preparing a catalogue of products which can be used in place of asbestos-cement. The EPA emphasis is on product substitution as they appear to recognise that there is no substitute for asbestos for the reinforcement of cement. This catalogue is scheduled for publication by 1st September and will be widely publicised particularly in the trade press. German Eternit understands that there will be extensive quotation of the Califano figures on cancer risks in the United States.

Although the attitudes of the Federal Ministries of Labour and Housing at present suggest that asbestos-cement creates no health risk to the general public or in the environment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs appears to be less than optimistic that those two departments will be able to withstand possible political pressure which could be exerted on them to change their view.

It seems probable that a court action will be brought against the German EPA by Eternit or by the WVAZ. This development has been complicated by a press release three days ago by the Wirtschaftsverband Asbest which criticises the EPA. the WVA and the WVAZ very rarely see eye-to-eye!

At a conference of State Ministers of the Environment on 8th May the Bremen Minister suggested that all States should follow the Bremen lead in banning totally the use of asbestos within their States by 1st April 1983. The Bremen decision, which was taken on 25th June, produced a vote on strictly party lines and intensive lobbying is now taking place to try to get this rescinded. It appears from the 8th May meeting that two other States indicated that they might follow the Bremen approach. However, the next meeting of State Ministers on 1st November is likely to confine discussion to the replacement of asbestos-cement based on the catalogue which is to be produced by the EPA.

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Herr Ehrenberg, the Federal Labour Minister, is proposing to hold a conference on substitutes for asbestos in 1982. The present indications are that this may take place about mid-summer.

German Eternit are clearly in near panic from the present position and have set up a task force freed from all other management responsibilities. This consists of Schwarz, Bornemann and Schermer and reports direct to Dr. Reicher who is giving not less than 33% of his time to the political side of asbestos and health developments. The task force is collecting data and is undertaking political lobbying at Federal and State level and is contacting all its customers. We have suggested that the task force should cover the whole of the industry and not be seen to be just an Eternit initiative.

H.D.S. HARDIE